صكذا من الاصل

Saturday December 30 1995

Abu Dhabi D 8.50 Albania L 225 Andorra FF 10 Austria AS 28 Bahrain BD 0.80 Belgium BF 60 Bulgaria L 170 Croatia KN 12.50 Cyprus CE 0.90 Czech Republic KC45 Denmark DK 14 Dubai D 8.50 Egypt EE 5 Estonia K 30 Finland FM 11 France FF 10 Germany DM 3.50 Greece D 350 Hong Kong HK$ 23 Hungary F 185 Iceland IK 185 India Rs 55 Israel NIS 8.90 Italy L 2,800 Jordan JD 1.00 Kuwait KD 0.50 Latvia US$ 2 Lebanon US$ 1.50 Lithuania US$ 2 Luxembourg LF 55 Madeira E 260 Malta ML 0.43 Morocco D 15 Netherlands G 3.75 Norway NK 15 Oman OR 1.00 Pakistan R 70 Poland Z 5.70 Portugal E 230 Qatar QR 8.50 Russia US$ 2.00 Saudi Arabia R 10 Slovakia SK 55 Slovenia SLT 260 Spain P 200 Sweden SK 15 Switzerland SF 3 Thailand B 80 Tunisia TD 1.750 Turkey TL 100,000 Ukraine US$ 2.00 USA US$ 2.75

The Guardian INTERNATIONAL

Printed in London, Manchester, Frankfurt and Roubaix

NEWSPAPER OF THE YEAR

46,436

Outlook

The movers and shakers of the coming year

Plus: Predictions for 1996

Sport

Glimmer of hope for England

Pages 11/12

Arts

A return to India with the late Louis Malle

Outlook page 18

Shopper knifings revive fears

Ten wounded by shelf-stacker

David Ward and Duncan Campbell

TEN people including two members of staff and a 15-year-old boy were injured when a shelf-stacker ran amok with two knives in a Birmingham supermarket yesterday.

The stabbings prompted a warning from the Association of Chief Police Officers that violence involving knives now represented a significant threat to the community.

Maria Wallis, assistant chief constable of Sussex, who is co-ordinating the current month-long knives amnesty for Acpo said: "I said at the start of this campaign that knives represented a significant threat to our communities. What has happened in Birmingham reinforces that message."

Terrified shoppers and assistants fled from the Netto store in Bordesley Green as the 23-year-old man, described by his boss as the best worker in the store, paced the aisles with a Swiss army knife and a four-inch blade above his head, lashing out at random.

As screaming customers and young children dived for cover, the man ran from the shop pursued by a security guard and the injured boy's father and stabbed two other people in the street before being overpowered.

Chief Inspector Eric Noble said at a press conference: "He was just stabbing innocent people — just stabbing them as he went along."

Ten ambulances ferried the injured, most of whom had stab wounds to the back, to hospital.

Four suffered serious injuries but doctors said their heavy winter clothes probably saved their lives.

Surgeons at Heartlands hospital in Birmingham, where nine of the casualties were taken, operated on a 65-year-old man, who had received a serious stab wound to the abdomen.

Two victims were discharged after treatment and the condition of the others, including a 41-year-old worker at the shop who had been taken to hospital by air ambulance, was described as stable.

Mark Edwards, aged 15, from King's Heath, was stabbed in the back. Speaking from hospital, he said he had gone into the store with his parents and nine-year-old sister Elizabeth.

"I could hear a commotion and I thought it was a shoplifter," he said. "Everyone started to head towards the exits and then I saw a man running down with two knives in his hands.

"He was just jabbing and stabbing with the knives as he came by. My sister was standing still and he was going towards her. I grabbed her and just pushed her through the exit. I turned round to go out myself and then felt like I had been punched in the back."

His father Robert, aged 47, drove him to the hospital. He said: "It was not until we saw the knives that we realised it was something very serious. We have all been very lucky to get out alive."

Lorry driver Dennis Cooksey, aged 57, from Castle Vale, Birmingham, was stabbed in the left shoulder. "We were standing right by the rubber doors that go into the storeroom and he came from there," he said last night, as he was treated for his wound in hospital.

"I must have been the first one he stabbed. He was so calm and collected. He walked around stabbing anyone who had their back towards him. He was just jabbing at everyone. He walked out the front door. I tried to go after him but my shoulder started going all numb and I realised I'd been stabbed."

Mr Noble praised the bravery of members of the public and of police officers PC Paul Brown and Wpc Sharon Brown, who are not related. Without their actions the incident could have been much worse.

John Rix, managing director of Netto Foodstores, described the shop assistant, who had worked at the shop since it opened in May, as quiet and hard-working. "He was the best assistant we had in that store. He turned up for work this morning at 7am as normal. There was nothing strange about his behaviour."

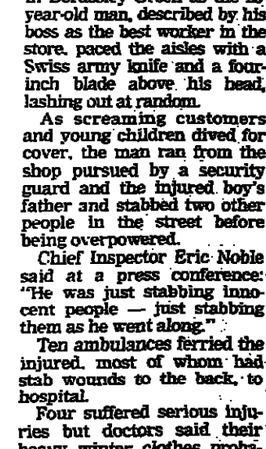
Carl Ball, area manager of the chain, said: "We are very, very distressed and we are launching a full investigation."

Last night police were questioning a man about the incident.

A total of 3,864 knives have been handed in since the start of a month-long "Bin That Knife" amnesty on December 20. The scheme is sponsored by the Daily Mirror.

Acpo supports the knives initiative, saying that it can only be good if knives are taken out of circulation. But some senior officers believe that such amnesties are of limited value because serious criminals will never hand any weapons in and the disposal and collection of knives can be administratively time-consuming.

The stabbing coincides with Christmas period incidents involving knife murders. John Trinder was stabbed 20 times on his way home from a pub in Peckham, south-east London, early on Christmas Day. Police are still hunting his killer. A 15-year-old boy was remanded into local authority care by magistrates yesterday accused of stabbing an Oxford pub landlady's son to death in a car park on Wednesday night.



Award for leading Conservative supporter casts blight on lacklustre new year's list

Honours hit by row over Tory funds

Patrick Wintour, Chief Political Correspondent

THE release of the New Year's Honours List was marred last night by a furious attack by John Prescott, the Labour deputy leader, who criticised the granting of a knighthood to Graham Kirkham, the Thatcherite businessman who is believed to have given the Conservative Party a £4 million bridging loan. Mr Prescott said it was wrong that such a close supporter of the Tory party had been given a knighthood.

Mr Kirkham is the Doncaster-based executive chairman of the DFS Furniture chain and one of the richest men in Britain.

Downing Street, angry at the way in which the carefully crafted if lacklustre New Year's Honours List had been slighted, said: "The citation in London Gazette is clear. He has been awarded a knighthood for charitable services to the Duke of Edinburgh's Award and to the Animal Health Trust."

Whitehall insisted he had not been nominated by the Conservative Party and his political service was not a factor in the nomination.

The controversial relationship between Tory funds and the granting of honours was heightened by a knighthood for Paul Judge, the Conservative Party's former director general who tried to wipe out the Tory deficit and failed in a libel action against the Guardian this year.

Stanley Kalms, the chairman of Dixons and a prominent member of the quangocracy who personally donates to the Tory party in addition to his company's annual gift of £25,000 a year, was given a knighthood for services to the electrical retailing industry.

Another of the 56 honours granted for political service goes to Andrew Lansley, the former head of Conservative Party Research who has been repeatedly attacked in recent months for recommending that his party raise the profile of immigration in the tabloids in the run-up to the election. He is given a CBE.

More surprisingly, two inveterate backbench rebels from both sides of the Tory European divide, James Lester, the MP for Broxtowe, and Michael Spicer, MP for Worcestershire, are knighted.

Mr Spicer, a now reformed Maastricht rebel, infuriated the Tory whips' office two weeks ago by contributing to the Government's fisheries defeat in the Commons when he mistakenly thought the vote was at 10pm rather than 7pm.

Mr Spicer's offer of an honour had been despatched before his blunder.

James Molyneaux, the former leader of the Ulster Unionists and close ally of John Major, is given a KBE.

Life peerages were granted to Sir David Gillmore, the former head of the Diplomatic Service, Sir Robert Kilpatrick, the General Medical Council's former president, and Dick Taverne, former Labour MP and now a senior Liberal Democrat.

Stella Rimington, the first female director general of the security services is made a Dame Commander of the Order of the Bath.

In the arts, rock musician Elton John and Nicholas Roeg, the film director, are given CBEs.

In the most demotic touch, Julie Goodyear, the former Coronation Street landlady Bet Gilroy is given an MBE — a fact leaked a day early to the Sun to the intense annoyance of Downing Street.

One third of the list are women and 40 per cent of the list were people nominated by the public.

Edwards is thrilled, page 10

Triple jumper Jonathan Edwards and his son, Sam, celebrate his MBE in the snow PHOTOGRAPH: MIKE SCOTT

Praise for tragic heroism on ice lake

Martin Wainwright

POSTHUMOUS honours are expected to be awarded to the two men who gave their lives this week in a vain attempt to rescue a young girl who fell through ice while chasing her dog across a boating lake.

The Home Secretary, Michael Howard, yesterday praised the heroism of senior fire officer Michael Mee, aged 48, whose widow described watching how her husband crawled across ice to try to reach 11-year-old Tracey Pattison and 51-year-old Jack Crawshaw. Mr Crawshaw, another passerby, had collapsed trying to reach the girl at Hemsworth water park, near Pontefract, West Yorkshire.

"This is a further reminder of the courage and bravery members of the emergency services show," said Mr Howard. "They are prepared to risk their lives on our behalf, day in and day out."

The selflessness of the two men was praised by the Bishop of Wakefield, the Right Reverend Nigel McCulough, whose diocese includes the villages of South Hiendly and Wrenthorpe, where Mr Mee and Mr Crawshaw lived. The bishop said: "Such acts of heroism give us all hope."

Hemsworth town council, which won national acclaim for the £1 million water park on the former Kinsley open-cast colliery, met to consider extra safety measures. But councillors quoted a catalogue of attacks by vandals on lifebelts and noticeboards.

Council clerk Chris Geeson said: "Even while the bodies of the victims were being taken from the big lake, children were playing on the ice of the smaller lake nearby. When they were asked to keep off the ice, all we got was abuse."

Woman's body found in lay-by

Duncan Campbell Crime Correspondent

DETECTIVES were last night trying to identify the naked body of a young woman found in a lay-by near Worcester yesterday. It was feared it could be that of missing French student Celine Figard who disappeared 10 days ago.

The body was discovered at 12.30pm when a motorist whose windscreen wipers were not working properly pulled into the lay-by near the village of Hawford, off the A449 dual carriageway between Worcester and Kidderminster.

It was behind a fence, close to a wooded area. A spokesman for West Mercia police said that they were unable to say how long it might have lain there or the cause of death. "The dead woman is believed to be in her early twenties," said the spokesman. "We do not have any indication as to her identity at the moment. Any suggestion that it might be a missing girl from Hampshire or from Avon and Somerset is pure speculation."

The spokesman said West Mercia had been in touch with both police forces in question, and also with other forces trying to trace missing women of her age.

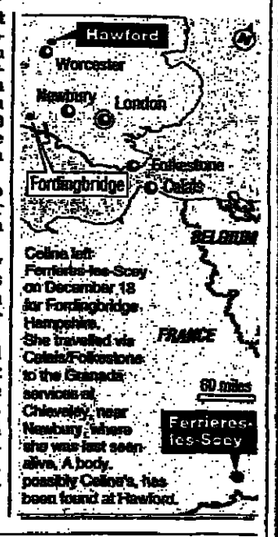
There have been a series of unsolved murders of young women whose naked bodies have been dumped in the Midlands. A spokeswoman for Hampshire police last night confirmed that detectives were driving Celine's cousin Jean-Marc Figard to Newtown hospital in Worcester in an attempt to identify the body.

Ms Figard, aged 19, disappeared on the Tuesday before Christmas after taking a lift from a lorry driver at Chieveley service area at the junction of the M4 and A34 near Newbury in Berkshire. Despite an appeal from her father and a response from more than 400 members of the public, the lorry driver has not been traced.

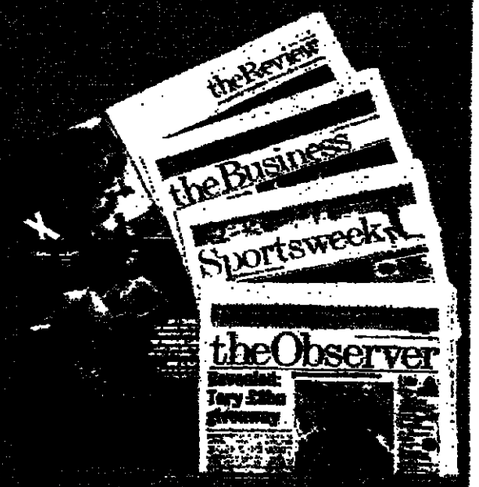
She had been planning to spend Christmas with her cousin, who works at a hotel in Fordingbridge, Hampshire.

The lay-by where the body was found was about 80 miles from where she was last seen and would have taken a car or lorry about two hours to drive.

A spokesman for Avon and Somerset police said at present they were not connecting the lay-by body with the disappearance of Louise Smith, aged 18, who went missing after attending a Christmas Eve disco. Her father has appealed unsuccessfully for information.



Set your alarm this Sunday



Inside Outlook 52

9 770261 307460

Clinton uses veto in fight over budget

Martin Walker in Washington

PRESIDENT Bill Clinton and Republican Congressional leaders said last night that they were ready to cancel their New Year holiday plans to negotiate a budget agreement, amid growing public anger at the partial shutdown of the federal government.

But even as both sides stressed their readiness to reach a deal, Mr Clinton raised the stakes by vetoing the defence authorisation bill which Congress had passed, claiming it cost too much. The president said its funding for a new form of star wars would breach the Anti-Ballistic Missile treaty and create tension with Russia.

The defence bill gave the Pentagon $7 billion (around £4.5 billion) more than it had requested and required the development of anti-missile defences to protect United States territory within seven years. Mr Clinton said it was was "costly and unnecessary and would waste tens of billions of dollars".

Mr Clinton was also threatening to veto the welfare reform bill passed by the House. He said funds should be kept for children and medical treatment for the poor.

Defence and welfare are two of the key ideological divisions blocking a compromise between the White House and Congress. Mr Clinton argues that Republican cuts in future Medicare and Medicaid spending "violate our national values". Republicans insist on a balanced budget within seven years "to stop burdening our children with paying off our deficits".

With more than a million federal workers facing half pay or no pay, the pressure on politicians to reach a deal is set to mount when the country gets back to work after the holiday.

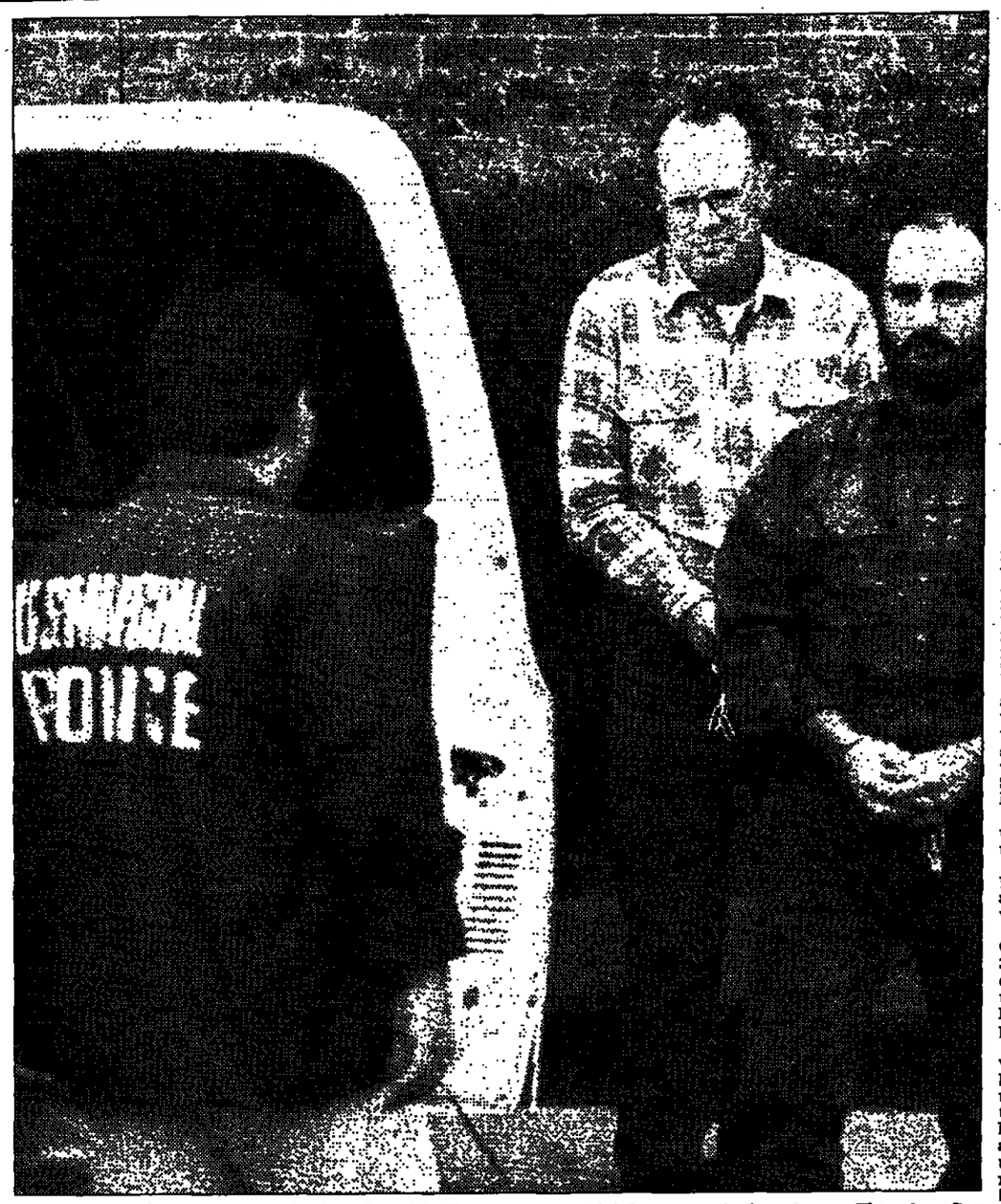
Prospects for a compromise rose when spokesmen for the 73 Republican in their first term in Congress — a hard line group that has blocked earlier agreements — said they were ready to negotiate on their demand for $245 billion in tax cuts.

The spokesman for the group, Congressman Joe Scarborough of Florida, said: "People aren't [just] bashing the president. People aren't bashing Congress. They're bashing everybody." Anger is likely to grow as the federal government grinds to a halt. More than 600,000 elderly people will lose their meals-on-wheels services; almost 40,000 home-buyers will not have their federal mortgage applications processed; the effective closure of the Bureau of Indian Affairs, the biggest employer at Indian *reservations across the country*, threatens widespread hardship made worse by the closure of emergency social welfare offices.

Meanwhile, the counties around the Yosemite and Yellowstone national parks have been declared disaster areas because the closure of the parks has stopped tourism.

The American Federation of Government Employees, which has 210,000 members, will launch a series of protests next week, including picketing of Congressmen's homes by federal employees who have been laid off.

"It's going to get ugly," the AFGE president, John Sturdivant, said. "We have members who are having to choose between defaulting on a mort*gage and putting food on the* table."



Ellis Hurst and Joseph Bailie both of Gardnerville, Nevada, leave a US federal court in Reno late on Thursday after being charged with planting a large bomb, which failed to explode, at a tax office in the city on December 18. Radio reports linked the two men with anti-government militias, but an FBI spokesman denied this PHOTOGRAPH: DAVID PARKER

3,000 on death row await US execution boom

Ian Katz in New York

PRISON authorities are preparing for an "execution boom" next year after a year which saw the largest number of judicial killings in the United States since 1957.

The US has executed 56 killers this year as public support for capital punishment hardened and debate over its morality has almost ceased. With more than 3,000 inmates on death row and several legislative moves to cut short the appeals process pending, death penalty opponents predict a fresh surge in the rate of executions.

"At one time a few years ago I could name everyone who had been executed in this country since 1976," said Stephen Bright, director of the Atlanta-based Southern Centre for Human Rights.

"Now I can't even keep up with the number and that's all I do."

Anti-death penalty campaigners predict that the annual rate of executions will soon pass 100.

Since the US Supreme Court lifted a ban in 1976, 38 states have returned the death penalty to their statute books with two more, Iowa and Wisconsin, pledged to reintroduce it.

While protests over more violent forms of execution have prompted most states to switch to lethal injection, several, including Florida, Georgia, Indiana and South Carolina, still use the electric chair, a method which has been branded inhumane by human rights groups and numerous scientists.

Unless the condemned man changes his mind, a *firing squad* in Utah will next month shoot dead John Taylor, a child-murderer who has embarassed the state by excercising his right to be put to death by the traditional method.

Taylor would be only the second man to be executed by a firing squad in the United States since the Supreme Court lifted its bar on the death penalty.

In another potential milestone, *Illinois plans to put* to death Guinevere Garcia on January 17, carrying out only the second execution of a woman since the 1960s.

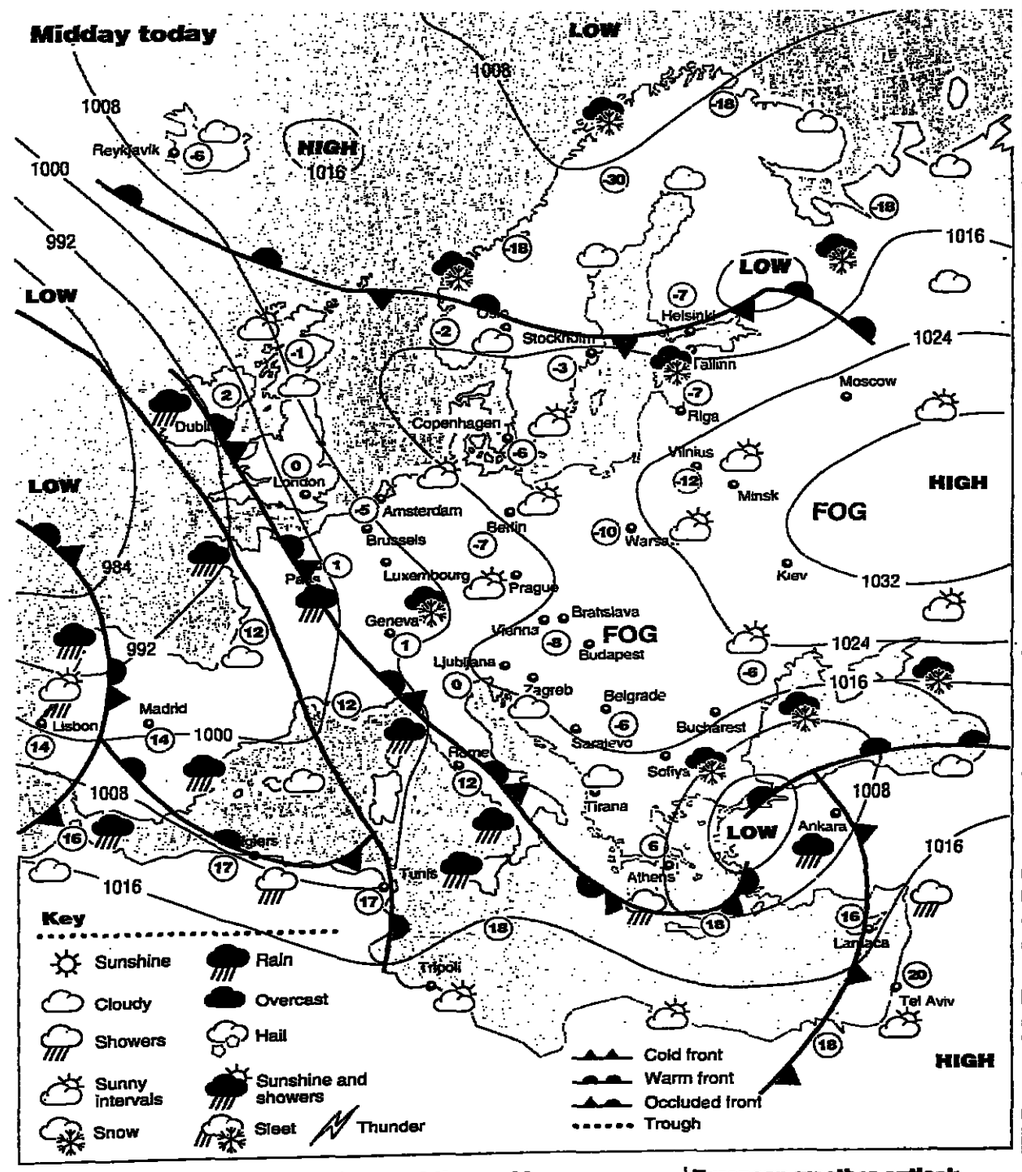
With the country gripped by a tough-on-crime mood and violent crime rates falling sharply, public doubts about the death penalty have all but evaporated.

The voices of those who point out that the sharpest *crime drops have been in* states, such as New York, where the death penalty was not applied, are easily drowned out by supporters of capital punishment attributing falling murder *rates to increasing num*bers of executions.

Most strikingly, the removal earlier this year of federal funding for the legal centres which provide representation for death row inmates raised scarcely a protest. Anti-death penalty campaigners say closing centres will leave hundreds of condemned men and women without lawyers.

"The big debate before was whether, when the numbers got up this high, people would react with revulsion or indifference," says Mr Bright. "Clearly this year would indicate the answer is indifference."

The weather in Europe



Forecast for the cities

Today

	max	min	weather
Algiers	17	12	R
Amsterdam	-5	-7	S
Athens	9	3	F
Berlin	-7	-12	S
Bonn	-1	-2	Sn
Brussels	-2	-3	Sn
Copenhagen	-6	-9	F
Crete	14	10	Sh
Geneva	1	0	Sn
Larnaca	17	12	F
London	1	1	Sn
Madrid	15	11	R
Milan	2	1	Sn
Nice	13	10	R
Oslo	-7	-12	F
Paris	3	2	R
Rome	12	10	C
Stockholm	-8	-12	F
Tunis	15	11	R
Vienna	-7	-10	Fg

Tomorrow

	max	min	weather
Algiers	18	10	S
Amsterdam	0	-1	Sn
Athens	8	2	S
Berlin	0	0	Sn
Bonn	2	1	Sn
Brussels	2	1	Sn
Copenhagen	0	-3	F
Crete	12	7	S
Geneva	3	2	R
Larnaca	18	10	F
London	3	3	Fg
Madrid	15	10	R
Milan	3	2	R
Nice	14	12	R
Oslo	-12	-16	Fg
Paris	5	3	C
Rome	10	9	R
Stockholm	-10	-15	F
Tunis	15	11	R
Vienna	-3	-3	Sn

Monday

	max	min	weather
Algiers	15	8	Sh
Amsterdam	0	-1	Sn
Athens	10	6	Sh
Berlin	0	-4	F
Bonn	1	-2	C
Brussels	1	-2	C
Copenhagen	-1	-6	F
Crete	12	7	Sh
Geneva	1	-1	Fg
Larnaca	20	11	S
London	2	1	Sl
Madrid	17	10	S
Milan	3	1	Fg
Nice	12	10	R
Oslo	-14	-20	Fg
Paris	4	3	R
Rome	8	7	R
Stockholm	-10	-14	F
Tunis	14	10	Sh
Vienna	-2	-3	Sn

Tuesday

	max	min	weather
Algiers	18	10	F
Amsterdam	-1	-1	Sn
Athens	13	10	R
Berlin	-1	-4	C
Bonn	2	1	Dr
Brussels	2	2	Dr
Copenhagen	-7	-4	C
Crete	14	10	Sh
Geneva	3	2	Fg
Larnaca	18	13	C
London	3	2	M
Madrid	16	10	F
Milan	3	3	Fg
Nice	11	6	F
Oslo	-16	-20	M
Paris	9	5	F
Rome	11	5	F
Stockholm	-8	-13	F
Tunis	17	10	F
Vienna	-1	-2	Fg

C cloudy, Cl clear, Dr drizzle, F fair, Fg fog, H hail, Ha haze, R rain, Sh showers, Sl sleet, Sn snow, S sunny, Th thunder. * previous days readings

Around the world

Lunchtime yesterday (previous day in Americas)

Ajaccio	R	13	55	Luxembourg	S	3	37
Algiers	S	17	63	Madrid	R	14	57
Amsterdam	S	4	39	Majorca	F	18	64
Athens	R	13	55	Malaga	R	14	57
Atlanta	S	2	36	Malta	S	17	63
B Aires	S	26	82	Manila	C	28	82
Barbados	S	28	82	Mecca	S	28	82
Barcelona	S	12	54	Mexico City	S	18	64
Belgrade	S	4	39	Miami	C	23	73
Berlin	S	-7	19	Milan	S	4	39
Bermuda	Sh	15	59	Mombasa	Sh	30	86
Biarritz	S	12	54	Montreal	C	-4	25
Bombay	S	30	86	Moscow	C	-14	7
Bordeaux	S	14	57	Munich	S	4	39
Boston	S	3	37	Nairobi	S	27	81
Brussels	S	4	39	Naples	R	14	57
Budapest	S	-6	21	Nassau	R	26	79
Cairo	S	22	72	New Delhi	S	19	66
Calgary	F	-7	19	New Orleans	F	8	46
Cape Town	S	24	75	New York	S	3	37
Casablanca	S	20	68	Nice	R	13	55
Chicago	S	-5	23	Oporto	R	16	61
Copenhagen	S	-5	23	Oslo	C	-17	1
Corfu	R	14	57	Paris	S	-2	28
Dakar	S	26	79	Perth	S	28	82
Dallas	S	5	41	Port Stanley	C	13	55
Dublin	S	2	36	Prague	S	-12	10
Faro	S	18	64	Reykjavik	S	-6	21
Florence	S	7	45	Rhodes	F	17	63
Frankfurt	S	-4	25	Rio de Jan.	S	23	73
Funchal	Sh	19	66	Riyadh	S	35	95
Geneva	S	-1	30	Rome	F	13	55
Gibraltar	S	17	63	Singapore	C	28	82
Hamburg	F	-4	25	Stockholm	S	-4	25
Harare	Th	28	79	Strasbourg	S	-4	25
Helsinki	S	-7	19	Sydney	C	23	73
Innsbruck	S	-6	21	Tel Aviv	S	20	68
Istanbul	R	8	46	Tenerife	S	19	66
Jersey	S	0	32	Tokyo	S	8	46
Jerusalem	S	18	64	Toronto	S	-5	23
Jo'burg	S	26	77	Tunis	Sh	17	63
K. Lumpur	S	31	88	Valencia	S	13	55
Kiev	S	-9	16	Vancouver	Sh	9	48
Kingston	S	27	81	Venice	C	7	34
Larnaca	S	19	66	Vienna	S	-9	16
Lima	C	23	77	Warsaw	F	-9	16
Lisbon	S	17	63	Washington	S	3	37
Locarno	S	7	34	Wellington	S	19	66
Los Angeles	S	16	61	Zurich	Sn	-5	23

European weather outlook

Scandinavia:

Northern Scandinavia will remain extremely cold *but mainly clear with little or no wind, but south*ern Scandinavia, including southern Finland will be slightly less cold with snow in places. Denmark should have another fine but very cold day. Max temperature ranging from -2C in south-west Norway to -30C in the northern interior.

Low Countries, Germany, Austria, Switzerland:

Most places should stay fine but very cold indeed with a penetrating easterly wind. Snow will spread across much of Switzerland during the day, probably also affecting south-west Germany and Belgium. Max temps between -2 and -7C, but up to 2C in western Switzerland.

France:

Atlantic fronts will spread snow across northern and eastern France, *but rain is more likely in the* west and south as much milder southerly winds set in. Max temps -1 to -4 in the north and east, 8 to 12 in the south and west.

Spain and Portugal:

A very disturbed westerly airflow will bring belts of rain alternating with drier brighter interludes. The rain and wind will be worst in the west and north. Max temps between 12 and 17C.

Italy:

Another mainly cloudy day with rain at times, and in northern Italy it could still be cold enough for snow rather than rain. Max temp ranging from 2C in the north to 15 in the south.

Greece:

After a wet start with heavy snow over northern hills, the weather should gradually become drier and brighter during the day. Max temps ranging from 3C in the northern interior to 14C in the southern islands.

Television and radio — Saturday

BBC 1

6.35am News; Weather. 8.30 SuperTed. 8.35 The Artbox Bunch. 8.50 Ionogoud. 9.05 Peter Pan And The Pirates. 9.30 The New Adventures Of Superman. 10.15 Live And Kicking. 1.12 Weather. 1.15 Grandstand. 6.20 News, Weather. 6.30 Regional News And Weather. 6.35 Dad's Army. 7.05 Jim Davidson's 'S Generation Game. 8.00 The Gotcha Hall Of Fame. 8.50 The National Lottery Live. 9.05 Casualty. 9.55 News And Sport; Weather. 10.15 FILM: Only The Lonely. 11.55 Match Of The Day. 1.00 They Think It's All Over. 1.40 FILM: Carry On Abroad. 3.05 Weather. 3.10 Close.

BBC 2

7.35am FILM: Le Cinema des Paches. 8.45 FILM: Windjag The Sailor. 10.05 FILM: Forbidden Cargo. 11.30 The Voyage Of Charles Darwin. 12.30 The Royal Institution Christmas Lectures - Planet Earth, An Expl 1.30 The Power Behind The Image. 2.10 FILM: Animal Farm. 3.20 FILM: Spartacus. 6.30 Schumacher. 7.05 Moving Pictures Special: The Reality Trip. 8.05 Bookmark. 8.55 The Young Ones. 9.40 Hoop Dreams. 12.20 Tx. 1.20 Unplugged - Page And Plant. 2.20 FILM: Hellzapoppin. 3.50 Weatherview. 4.00 Close.

BBC Prime

● Intelsat

6.00am BBC World News. 6.30 Rainbow. 6.45 Creepy Crawlies. 6.55 The Return Of Dogtanian. 7.20 The Really Wild Guide To Britain. 7.45 The Secret Garden. 8.15 Blue Peter. 8.40 Mike And Angelo. 9.00 70s Top Of The Pops. 9.30 Best Of Kilroy. 10.25 The Best Of Anne And Nick. 12.05 The Best Of Pebble Mill. 12.55 Prime Weather. 1.00 Eastenders. 2.00 Live Aid Tenth Anniversary. 6.00 BBC World News. 6.30 A Year In Provence. 7.00 Neil's 'Gotcha' Special. 8.00 Jack The Ripper. 8.55 Clarissa. 10.25 Prime Weather. 10.30 Alas Smith & Jones. 11.00 The Barchester Chronicles. 12.00 Luv. 12.30 Lytton's Diary. 1.20 The Sweeney. 2.10 A Fatal Inversion. 3.10 Arena: The Peter Sellers Story. 4.20 Lytton's Diary. 5.10 The Sweeney.

BBC World

● Eutelsat

6.00am World News. 6.20 The Late Show. 7.00 World News. 7.15 Everyman. 8.00 World Headlines. 8.05 Rough Guide To The World's Island. 9.00 World News. 9.25 Time Out: Holiday. 10.00 World Headlines. 10.05 Horizon. 11.00 World News. 11.20 Britain In View. 12.00 World Headlines. 12.05 The World Debate. 1.00 World News. 1.20 World News Week. 2.00 World News. 2.25 Time Out: Film '95. 3.00 Bbc World Headlines. 3.05 Assignment. 4.00 World News. 4.25 Time Out: QED. 5.00 World News. 5.25 Time Out: The *Clothes Show. 6.00 World News.* 6.20 World News Week. 7.00 World News. 7.20 The Late Show. 8.00 World Headlines. 8.05 Horizon. 9.00 World News. 9.25 Time Out: Top Gear. 10.00 World News. 10.05 World Business Review. 11.00 *World News.* 11.25 World Business Report. 12.00 World News. 12.25 India Business Report. 1.00 *World News.* 1.25 World Business Review. 2.00 Bbc World *News. 2.25 India Business Report. 3.00* World News. 3.25 World Business Review. 4.00 World News. 4.25 Time Out: Food And Drink. 5.00 World News. 5.20 Britain In View.

Radio 4

92.4-94.6 MHz; 198 kHz (1514)

7.00am News Briefing. 7.10 Farming Today. 7.30 Prayer for the Day. 7.55 Weather. 8.00 Today. 8.56 Weather. 10.00 (FM) News. 10.00 (LW) Test Match Special. 10.05 (FM) Sport on 4. 10.30 (FM) Breakaway. 11.00 (FM) News. Loose Ends. 12.00 (FM) News. The Modern Mage. 12.30 (FM) From Our Own Correspondent. 1.00 (FM) Money Box. 1.25 (FM) News Quiz of the Year. 1.55 (FM) Weather. 2.00 (FM) News. 2.10 (FM) Our Next Question, Please. 2.55 Shipping Forecast. 3.00 (FM) News, Toady, Gravel and Ingratiate. 3.00 (LW) Test Match Special. 3.30 (FM) Saturday Playhouse. Seaton's Aunt. 5.00 News. Strong Impressions. 5.30 Science Now. 6.00 Tumpty-Tumpty-Tumpty-Tum. 6.30 Queenan Country. 6.50 Shipping Forecast. 6.55 Weather. 7.00 Six O'Clock News. 7.25 Year Ending. 7.50 Ad Lib. 8.20 Kaleidoscope Feature. 8.50 Saturday Night Theatre: Death of an Ugly Sister. 10.20 Music in Mind. 10.50 Ten to Ten. 10.59 Weather. 11.00 News. 11.15 Stanza on Stage. 11.45 Philosophy Figures. 12.00 Personal Records. 12.30 A Landscape Painter. 1.00 News. 1.30 The Late Story: Christmas Present. 1.48 Shipping Forecast. 2.00 As World Service. 6.50 Bells on Sunday. 6.55 (FM) The Radio 4UK Theme. 6.55 Shipping Forecast.

BBC World Service

BBC World Service can be received in England on MW 648 kHz (463m) and in Western Europe on LW 198 kHz (1515m)

7.00am Newsday. 7.30 Fourth Estate. 7.45 On Screen. 8.00 World News. 8.15 From The Weeklies. 8.30 People And Politics. 9.00 World News. 9.10 Words Of Faith. 9.15 A Jolly Good Show. 10.00 World News. 10.05 World Business Report. 10.15 From Pins to Paper Clips. 10.30 Butlers Guide to Science. 10.35 The Gene Shifters. A Guide to Biotechnology. 10.45 Sports Roundup. 11.00 Newsdesk. 11.30 BBC English: Pop Words. 11.45 Later from America. 12.00 Newsdesk. 12.30 Meridian. *1.00 World News. 1.05 World Business* Review. 1.15 Britain Today. 1.30 Just a Minute. 2.00 Newshour. 3.00 World News. 3.05 Sportsworld. 4.00 World News. 4.05 Sportsworld. 5.00 World News. 5.15 Sportsworld. 5.30 News in German. 6.00 News Summary. 6.01 Weekend. 6.30 Red Dwarf. 6.45 Sports Roundup. 7.00 Newsdesk. 7.30 Science In Action. 8.00 World News. 8.05 From Our Own Correspondent. 8.25 Book Choice. 8.30 Just A Minute. 9.00 Newshour. 10.00 World News. 10.05 World Business Review. 10.15 Britain Today. 10.30 Meridian. 11.00 Newsdesk. 11.30 Play of the Week: The Towers of Trebizond. 12.30 Jazz Now and Then. 12.45 Seven Days. 1.00 Newsdesk. 1.30 The Learning World. 1.45 Britain Today. 2.00 World News. 2.10 Press Review. 2.15 Early Visions. 2.30 From Our Own Correspondent. 2.50 Write On. 3.00 Newsday. 3.30 The Ed Stewart Show. 4.00 World News. 4.15 Sports Roundup. 4.30 Fourth Estate. 4.45 Science View. 4.50 Waveguide. 5.00 Newsdesk. 5.30 Short Story. 5.45 The Multitrack Sessions. 6.00 Newsday. 6.30 Weekend.

The Movie Channel

● Astra

7.00 Tarzan And His Male. 9.00 The Good, The Bad And Huckleberry Hound. 11.00 Only When I Larf. 1.00 Dennis. 3.00 Bonanza: Under Attack. 5.00 Heart And Souls. 7.00 Touch Of Truth. 9.00 Dennis. 11.00 *The Assassin. 1.00 While Justice* Sleeps. 2.55 After Midnight. 4.10 Blueberry Hill.

Sky Movies

● Astra

7.00 Showcase. 9.00 Mass Appeal. 11.00 Digger. 1.00 The Lion. 3.00 Agatha Christie's Sparkling Cyanide. 5.00 Meteor Man. 7.00 Digger. 9.00 That Night. 11.00 Fortress. 12.45 Midnight Confessions. 2.05 Kickboxer III: The Art Of War. 3.35 Blind Side. 5.10 Agatha Christie's Sparkling Cyanide.

Sky Movies Gold

● Astra

5.00 Mutiny On The Buses. 7.00 The Odd Couple. 8.55 Can't Stop The Music. 11.00 Rambo III. 12.50 Action Jackson. 2.30 Cat On A Hot Tin Roof. 4.20 Close.

Sky Sports

● Astra

8.00 Galactic World Sport Special. 8.30 Racing News. 9.00 South Africa v England. International Cricket. 4.30 Sports Saturday. 6.00 NFL - Wild Card Game. 9.30 Golf. 12.30 International Cricket Highlights. 2.30 Watersports World. 3.30 Close.

Eurosport

● Astra/Eutelsat

8.30 Eurofun. 9.00 Basketball. 9.30 Alpine Skiing. 11.00 Ski Jumping. 11.45 Alpine Skiing. 12.00 Alpine Skiing. 12.45 Alpine Skiing. 1.30 Rally Raid. 2.30 Equestrianism. *5.00 Alpine Skiing. 5.30 Ski Jumping. 7.00* Boxing. 8.00 Figure Skating. 9.30 Rally Raid. 10.00 All Sports. 11.00 Martial Arts. 12.00 Ski Jumping. 1.00 International Motorsports Report. 2.00 Close.

Sky One

● Astra

8.00 Postcards From The Hedge. 8.00 Wild *West Cowboys Of Moo Mesa. 8.35 Teenage* Mutant Hero Turtles. 9.00 Incredible Dennis. 9.40 Dynamo Duck. 10.00 Ghoul-Lashed. 10.00 Bump In The Night. 10.30 Conan The Warrior. 11.00 X-Men. 11.30 Ghoulish Tales. 11.50 The Perfect Family. 12.00 Mighty Morphin Power Rangers. 12.30 Shoot. 1.00 World Wrestling Federation Mania. 2.00 The Hit Mix. 3.00 Wonder Woman. 4.00 Growing Pains. 4.30 Family Ties. 5.00 Kung Fu, The Legend Continues. 6.00 The Young Indiana Jones Chronicles. 7.00 World Wrestling Federation Superstars. 8.00 Pepsi Cop. 9.00 VR.5. 10.00 Cops. 10.30 The Serial Killers. 11.00 Dream On. 11.30 Tales From The Crypt. 12.00 The Movie Show. 12.30 Forever Knight. 1.30 WKRP In Cincinnati. 2.00 Saturday Night Live. 3.00 Hit Mix Long Play.

UK Gold

● Astra

8.00 Give Us A Clue. 8.30 Going For Gold. 8.55 Worship. 9.25 Secret Army. 11.00 Neighbours Omnibus. 1.00 All Creatures Great And Small. 2.50 What A Carry On!. 3.20 EastEnders Omnibus. 6.00 Some Mothers Do 'Ave 'Em. 7.00 George And Mildred. 7.30 'Allo 'Allo. 8.25 Bread. 8.30 'Allo 'Allo. 9.20 Home James. 10.15 Carrott's Lib. 11.10 Revno Unarmed And Dangerous. 1.15 Scotch n' Wry. 2.05 Scotch 'n' Wry. 3.00 Shopping.

NBC Superchannel

● Astra/Eutelsat

7.00 The Mclaughlin Group. 7.30 Hello Austria, Hello Vienna. 8.00 ITN World News. 8.30 Europa Journal. 9.00 Cyberschool. 10.00 Ushuaia. 11.00 *Super Shop.* 12.00 Masters Of The Beauty. 12.30 Great Houses Of The World. 1.00 Videotheque. 1.30 The Best Of Fallen Blues. 2.00 *NHL Power Week.* 3.00 Johnnie Walker World Championships Of Golf. 4.00 Iron Man — Iron Woman. 5.00 Skiing. 6.00 ITN World News. 6.30 Air Combat. 7.30 The Best Of The Selina Scott Show. 8.30 Anderson Golf Semi Finals Live. 12.00 Late Night With Conan O'brien. 1.00 The Best Of Talkin' Blues. 1.30 The Tonight Show With Jay Leno. 2.30 Late Night With Conan O'brien. 3.30 The Best Of Talkin' Blues. 4.00 Rivera Live. 5.00 International Business View. 5.30 NBC News. 6.00 Weekly Business. 6.30 NBC News.

Discovery

● Astra/Intelsat

5.00 Arthur C Clarke's Mysterious World. 10.00 Frontline. 10.30 Secret Weapons. 11.00 Into The Unknown. 12.00 Into The Unknown. 1.00 Close.

Television and radio — Sunday

BBC 1

6.35am FILM: Inspector Clouseau. 10.10 News. 10.15 The Big Question. 10.30 First Light. 11.00 CountryFile. 11.30 FILM: El Cid. 2.25 News. 2.30 Review Of The Year 1995. 3.45 EastEnders. 4.45 FILM: Labyrinth. 6.20 Black Hearts In Battersea. 6.50 News; Weather. 7.05 Regional News. 7.10 Songs Of Praise On Ice. 7.45 Antiques Roadshow. 8.30 Pie In The Sky. 9.20 FILM: Strictly Ballroom. 10.50 News; Weather. 11.05 I Worked With Morecambe And Wise... And Look What Happened To Me. 12.00 The End Of The Year Show With Angus Deayton. 1.05 Happy New Year. 1.10 Hogmanay Live. 2.00 FILM: Carry On Camping. 3.25 Weather. 3.30 Close.

BBC 2

8.30am The Adventures Of Sloppy. 8.55 Playdays. 9.10 Babar. 9.35 Jackanory. 10.00 Bess. 10.15 The Curious Case Of Dr Hertz Van Rental. 10.40 Phantom 2040. 11.05 Blue Peter — The Best Bits. 11.35 Grange Hill. 12.00 Newsround Review Of The Year. 12.30 The Royal Institute Christmas Lectures — Planet Earth, An Explor. 1.30 Rugby Special. 2.30 FILM: Gay Purr-ee. 3.50 FILM: Pal Joey. 5.40 Notes From A Diva. 6.30 Wildlife On Two. 7.00 FILM: The Wolves Of Willoughby Chase. 8.30 Video Nation — Best Of 95. 9.10 Close Up. 9.25 Fine Cut. 10.50 Screen Two. Return Of The Native. 12.30 TOTP2 Brit Pop: Then And Now. 1.00 Third Annual Jools Hootenanny. 2.50 FILM: Imagine: John Lennon. 4.00 Weatherview. 4.05 Close.

BBC Prime

● Intelsat

6.00am BBC World News. 6.30 Rainbow. 6.45 Melvin And Maureen's Music-A-Grams. 7.00 Coral Island. 7.25 Count Duckula. 7.45 Children Of The Dog Star. 8.10 Blue Peter. 8.35 Wild And Crazy Kids. 9.00 70s Top Of The Pops. 9.30 Best Of Kilroy. 10.30 The Best Of Anne And Nick. 12.05 The Best Of Pebble Mill. 12.55 Prime Weather. 1.00 The World Debate. 2.00 Anna Karenina. 2.55 Prime Weather. 3.00 Live Aid Tenth Anniversary. 6.00 BBC World News. 6.30 The Inspector Alleyn Mysteries. 8.00 Jack The Ripper. 9.35 Clarissa. 10.30 New Year's Eve Special. 11.55 Just Good Friends. 12.55 The Agatha Christie Hour. 1.30 The Sweeney. 2.15 The Ginger Tree. 3.15 The Trouble With Medicine. 4.10 The Agatha Christie Hour. 5.05 The Sweeney.

BBC World

● Eutelsat

6.00am News. 6.25 India Business Report. 7.00 News. 7.20 Business Week. 8.00 Headlines. 8.05 Assignment. 9.00 News. 9.25 The Clothes Show. 10.00 News. 10.15 Everyman. 11.00 News. 11.20 The Late Show. *12.00 Headlines. 12.05 Rough Guide* To The World's Islands. 1.00 Headlines. 1.05 From Walpole's Bottom To Major's Underpants. 2.00 News. 2.25 Top Gear. 3.00 Headlines. 3.05 Horizon. 4.00 News. 4.25 Holiday. 5.00 News. 5.25 Food And Drink. 6.00 Headlines. 6.05 From Walpole's Bottom To Major's Underpants. 7.00 News. 7.20 Britain In View. 8.00 Headlines. 8.05 Timewatch. 9.00 News. 9.25 This Multimedia Business. 10.00 Report. 11.00 News. 11.25 World Review. 12.00 News. 12.25 World Review '95. 1.00 News. 1.25 Business Report. 2.00 News. 2.25 Review '95. 3.00 News. 3.25 Business Report. 4.00 News. 4.25 Tomorrow's World. 5.00 Newsday.

Radio 4

92.4-94.6 MHz; 198 kHz (1514)

7.00am News Briefing. 7.10 Something Understood. 7.35 Weather. 8.00 News. 8.10 Sunday Papers. 8.15 On Your Farm. 8.40 Sunday. 9.30 The Week's Good Cause. 9.55 Weather. 10.00 News. 10.10 Sunday Papers. 10.15 Letter from America. 10.30 Morning Service. 11.15 The Archers. 12.15 Mediumwave. 12.45 Foreign Correspondence. 1.15 Desert Island Discs. 1.58 Weather. 2.00 The World This Weekend. 2.55 Shipping Forecast. 3.00 Gardeners' Question Time. 3.30 The Classic Serial: The Barchester Chronicles. 4.30 Pick of the Year. 5.15 Around the World in 24 Frames. 6.00 News. La Mia Italia. 6.30 Poetry Please. 6.50 Shipping. 7.00 News. 7.15 Letters from Ireland. 7.30 Anthony Trollope, the Chronicler of Barsetshire. 8.00 Children's BBC Radio 4 Tales from the Perilous Realm. 8.30 A Good Read. 9.00 (FM) The Player. 9.00 (LW) Suenos — World Spanish. 9.30 (FM) Strong Impressions. 9.45 (LW) New Francophonie. 10.00 (FM) Navronga Story. 10.15 (LW) Short Stories in French. 10.30 (FM) Please Leave a Message after the Beep. 10.30 (LW) Writer a Weekly. 10.59 Weather. 11.00 News. 11.15 Syncopation. 11.45 Usaje-Beatha 500. 12.15 Memories of a Childhood on the Veldt. 12.45 Seeds of Faith. 1.00 News. 1.30 The Late Story: A Goose for Christmas. 1.48 Shipping Forecast. 2.00 As World Service.

BBC World Service

7.00am Newsday. 7.30 Jazz for the Asking. 8.00 World News. 8.15 Global Concerns. 8.30 From Our Own Correspondent. 8.50 Write On. 9.00 World News. 9.10 Words of Faith. 9.15 Laugh a Ba, Cry a Little. 10.00 World News. 10.05 World Business Review. 10.15 In Praise of God. 10.45 Sports Roundup. 11.00 Newsdesk. 11.30 BBC English. 11.45 Short Story. 12.00 Newsdesk. 12.30 Jazz for the Asking. 1.00 World News. 1.05 World Business Brief. 1.15 Britain Today. 1.30 Anything Goes. 2.00 Newshour. 3.00 News Summary. 3.01 A Jolly Good Show. 3.45 Later from America. 4.00 World News. 4.05 Sports Roundup. 4.15 Laugh a Little, Cry a Little. 5.00 World News. 5.15 The New Europe. 5.30 News in German. 6.00 Composer of the Month. 6.30 Early Versions. 6.45 Sports Roundup. 7.00 Newsdesk. 7.30 Play Of The Week: The Towers of Trebizond. 9.00 Newshour. 10.00 World News. 10.05 World Business Brief. 10.15 Britain Today. 10.30 From Pens to Paperclips. 10.45 Butlers Guide to Science. 10.50 The Gene Shifters. 11.00 Newsdesk. 11.30 Letter from America. 11.45 Sports Roundup. 12.00 World News. 12.10 VoiceBox. 12.15 The Vintage Chart Show. 12.45 Regional News. 12.55 Book Choice. 1.00 Chimes and Full Strike of Big Ben. 1.01 Newsdesk. 1.30 The Multitrack Sessions. 1.45 Britain Today. 2.00 World News. 2.10 Press Review. 2.15 Red Dwarf. 2.30 Anything Goes. 3.00 Newsday. 3.30 Composer of the Month. 4.00 World News. 4.15 Sports Roundup. 4.30 Jazz for the Asking. 5.00 Newsdesk. 5.30 Off the Shelf: Peter Pan. 6.00 Newsday. 6.30 Andy Kershaw's World of Music.

The Movie Channel

● Astra

7.00 Cinderella. 9.00 Rockin' With Judy Jetson. 11.00 No Man Of Her Own. 1.00 Footlight Parade. 3.00 Kidz In The Wood. 5.00 Thumbelina. 6.45 The Living Daylights. 9.00 Last Action Hero. 11.15 Germinal. 1.55 Rubdown. 3.30 The Mighty Quinn. 5.10 Cinderella.

Sky Movies

● Astra

7.00 Showcase. 9.00 A Woman Rebels. 11.00 To My Daughter. 1.00 Call Of The Wild. 3.00 Death On The Nile. 5.25 Surf Ninjas. 7.00 Born Yesterday. 9.00 Calendar Girl. 11.00 Intersection. 12.40 The Movie Show. 1.10 All Shook Up! 2.40 Hoffa. 5.00 Born Yesterday.

Sky Movies Gold

● Astra

1.00 Heller In Pink Tights. 3.00 Kim. 5.00 Love Is A Many-splendored Thing. 7.00 The Trouble With Harry. 9.00 Star Wars. 11.00 Commando. 12.40 Conan The Barbarian. 2.50 Red Sonja. 4.20 Close.

Sky Sports

● Astra

8.00 Watersports World. 9.00 UK's Strongest Man. 10.00 International Cricket Highlights. 12.00 Rugby Union Update. 1.00 Goals On Sunday. 2.30 World Soccer Magazine. 3.00 WDC World Darts Championships. 6.00 Powerboat World. 6.30 Snowboard Tour. 7.00 Jackie Stewart's Celebrity Special. 8.00 Golf. 12.00 Darts. 3.30 Jackie Stewarts Celebrity Special. 4.30 Sports Unlimited. 5.30 Close.

Eurosport

● Astra/Eutelsat

8.30 Alpine Skiing. 9.30 Ski Jumping. 11.00 All Sports. 12.00 Prime Time Boxing. 1.00 Formula 1. 2.30 Aerobics. *2.50 Dancing. 3.30

صكات من الاصل

US juggernaut falters in the Balkan quagmire

Julian Borger in Sarajevo

THE American military juggernaut's wheels are beginning to spin in the Balkan mud as the weather and the intricacies of the Bosnian conflict expose some of its frailties and inexperience.

Nato officials announced yesterday that a US Apache helicopter had fired the first shot of the peace-enforcement campaign, when an electrical fault "accidentally discharged" a missile into a Bosnian Serb hillside. There were no casualties, but the mistake crowned a week full of mishaps and errors.

The misfire took place on Thursday when the Apache was picking up soldiers sent to guard another US helicopter crippled by mechanical problems just outside the Serb stronghold of Banja Luka.

According to Nato sources, Serb troops who went to investigate were so relieved the helicopter was not part of the despised UN peacekeeping mission that they offered the crew free hotel rooms while they waited for help.

Meanwhile, the much-delayed construction of a pontoon bridge over the River Sava has become almost a test of American manhood, after a week of televised floundering in freezing sludge.

Work on the bridge was thrown into chaos when the Sava burst its banks, flooding a US camp set up between the river and an earth dike. Television showed the US army's supposedly all-terrain Humvee cars stuck in knee-deep mud.

The US commander in northern Bosnia, General William Nash, went to the river banks yesterday to urge his men on.

"Pat, we've gotta make it happen now," he was overheard telling his rear commander, Brigadier-General Pat O'Neal. Gen Nash insisted that the bridge, the biggest the US army has built since the second world war, would be in place today.

Delays in the bridge's completion have held up the bulk of the 20,000-strong US contingent in the Nato-led Implementation Force (I-FOR). Instead, some American troops have been forced to travel to northern Bosnia through the Serbian capital, Belgrade, a detour unthinkable before the Dayton peace accord.

The deployment has already produced its first tough-talking maverick American officer. In a shoot-from-the-hip interview this week with the Wall Street Journal, Colonel Gregory Fontenot fired off quotes straight from an Oliver Stone film.

It quoted him as calling the Bosnian Croats "racist mother-fuckers", and speaking contemptuously of all three main ethnic groups.

"They don't think I trust them — and they're right," he said. "These are people who kill women and children and attack their neighbours. They're offended by me? Hell, I'm offended that I had to come here because of all their fighting."

Col Fontenot's armoured cavalry; the 1st squadron of the 1st regiment, is the oldest cavalry unit in the US army, and he compared the I-FOR mission to its 19th century campaigns against the Apaches. It was, he said, "post-colonial colonialism".

Most damaging to US morale, however, was his prediction that the Americans would be bogged down in Bosnia "forever".

This was definitely not what his superiors wanted to hear. The official US line is that the troops will be home well within the year, before the next presidential elections.

Gen Nash issued a public rebuke, saying he was "very disappointed", and ordered a military investigation. Nato officials, while privately agreeing with much Col Fontenot had to say, yesterday predicted his imminent departure.

British and French soldiers, many of whom have already spent years in Bosnia enduring persistent American derision, are unable to contain their glee at the teething troubles of the vast US military machine.

One European officer said: "The Americans are very good at doing the big things. It's the small things that usually trip them up. And Bosnia is a small country."

On his feet ... Boris Yeltsin, flanked by bodyguards, strolls around the Kremlin yesterday during his first day back after two months in hospital with heart problems

The president did not say if he will try for re-election

Uncertain Yeltsin returns to Kremlin

David Hearst in Moscow

PRESIDENT Boris Yeltsin returned to the Kremlin yesterday and went on his first public walkabout since he was rushed to hospital with a heart attack two months ago. But the Russian leader refused to say whether he would seek re-election next June.

"I mustn't exhaust myself as I did the last time," he said, referring to the first of his two heart attacks. "Although in the sanatorium I worked for four to five hours a day, it wasn't the usual day the president works." As for standing in the presidential elections, Mr Yeltsin said he was "still thinking" about it.

The president left Barvikha sanatorium earlier this week for a nearby country residence, where his press service said he planned to spend the New Year with his family.

Mr Yeltsin, aged 64, was flown to hospital on October 26 suffering an ischaemic heart condition, a blood supply problem.

The state of Mr Yeltsin's health is politically sensitive, particularly in the wake of the Communist Party's success in parliamentary elections earlier this month. Not only is his fitness crucial to the issue of his suitability as a candidate, it also affects the political calculations of his closest advisers. An ailing president without a chosen successor remains the bleakest of scenarios for them.

Mr Yeltsin's first strenuous task will be his visit to China, which has been delayed until spring. The visit is likely to be Russia's biggest foreign policy initiative next year, with Mr Yeltsin expected to sign 20 agreements, some involving key oil and gas deals.

But symbolism will also be important in a year in which Mr Yeltsin must respond to a nationalist agenda. He has to distance himself from the early years of his foreign minister, Andrei Kozyrev, whose policies led the Kremlin to be accused of hanging on to the coat tails of the West.

Mr Yeltsin said yesterday his China visit would "balance" Russia's foreign policy. "We mustn't allow ourselves to be accused of hanging on to the West," he said.

In a separate sign of this change in direction, the minister of foreign trade and deputy prime minister, Oleg Davidov, described Iran as a "friendly state and partner in strategic co-operation with Russia".

These remarks are bound to concern the United States, which has so far failed to get Russia to withdraw its agreement to build a nuclear reactor in Iran. Mr Davidov was speaking after signing an agreement with Iran for a joint oil programme.

The disastrous results of the government's Our Home is Russia party in the December 17 elections have already brought about a sharp change in presidential tone.

After criticising the omission of a plant producing harvesters in Krasnoyark in a list of strategic plants requiring federal investment, Mr Yeltsin rounded on his economics and finance ministries, which he claimed were full of "saboteurs".

Mr Yeltsin said: "There are high-ranking bureaucrats who openly steal, and there are no small number of them. They are even in the presidential administration and they must be completely swept out."

The president then left to record his traditional New Year's message to be broadcast on Sunday.

But the mood is uneasy, with each side waiting for the other to make a move. The Communist Party said this week it would not announce its presidential candidate at its plenary meeting this month and Mr Yeltsin has said he will not reveal his intentions until February.

Belgium hit by crime wave

Stephen Bates in Brussels

BELGIAN police fear that organised crime may be moving north from its more traditional haunts around the Mediterranean, after a spate of violent attacks on security vans.

The attacks have escalated over Christmas, culminating in the death of a security guard, who was killed this week just over the French border near Lille when armed robbers blasted their way into his van to seize supermarket takings with the aid of a rocket launcher.

Shortly before Christmas 70 shots were fired in an open-air gun battle after an attack on a security van in the Brussels suburb of Dilbeek. A 10-year-old girl was left paralysed after being caught in the crossfire. Police believe a gang of up to 12 may have taken part in both robberies.

In a daytime attack on the Carollywood cinema complex at Charleroi on the same day as the Lille robbery, a gang beat up staff before making off with Christmas takings worth more than £90,000. It is thought that this could have been a copycat attack.

Altogether there have been more than 50 attacks on security vans in Belgium this year. The police are nowhere near catching the culprits, though they believe one gang may be responsible for at least a dozen incidents. Inquiries have spread as far south as Marseille.

The attacks have left police and politicians blaming foreigners and pointing to the increased availability of heavy weapons from eastern Europe and former Yugoslavia.

"These gangs are highly organised and desperate and they have got hold of frightening weapons," a police spokesman said. "You can pick up a Kalashnikov assault rifle, or an Uzi, or high explosives for a few thousand francs."

But the gangs may come from closer to home: police point out that they appear to have good intelligence about the cargoes being carried, with hauls that have topped more than 100 million francs (£2.5 million pounds).

According to a lorry driver who saw the robbery on a motorway sliproad near Lille, the assault took at least 15 minutes and netted most of the Christmas takings of the local supermarkets.

In the wake of the assaults, tighter checks on applicants for security jobs as security guards have belatedly been introduced.

Authoritarianism beckons the black sheep of Europe

Vladimir Meciar has visited troubled times upon Slovakia's vulnerable democracy, reports **Ian Traynor** in Bratislava

TO DRIVE across the old East-West divide from Austria into Slovakia these days is to get a whiff of the way things used to be.

On the approach to Bratislava, the Slovak capital, the ubiquitous police are likely to stop motorists three or four times, demanding papers, inspecting vehicles, and insisting that some misdemeanour has been committed.

It is a chilly welcome to central Europe's youngest and most immature country, providing a glimpse of the growing authoritarianism that has Western Europe and the United States deeply concerned for Slovakia's democratic prospects.

However, the real reason for the traffic cops' bullying is not to remind you of the ever-present security apparatus, but simply a pathetic attempt to pocket loose change to augment their meagre wages.

These are troubling times for Slovakia, three years after the end of Czechoslovakia and its incarnation as an independent democracy.

Under the ruthless rule of the prime minister, Vladimir Meciar, politics have come to resemble a potboiler making fictional tales of intrigue and backstabbing at Westminster seem tame.

There has been a vicious battle between the prime minister and the president, which has seen the president's son kidnapped and dumped across the border; infighting between the police and the secret services; Mr Meciar's seizure of state television; worsening ethnic tension with neighbouring Hungary; and Mr Meciar's conflict with the constitutional court because it disagrees with him. All of this, and more, has turned Slovakia into the black sheep of post-communist central Europe.

Its unhappy status behind Poland, the Czech Republic and Hungary was confirmed at the European Union summit in Spain earlier this month, where Germany's chancellor, Helmut Kohl, omitted Slovakia from the list of East European countries he wants to join the EU first.

Germany is the key advocate of the EU's eastward expansion, and a crucial ally for the central Europeans. For the past several years, the Czechs, Slovaks, Poles and Hungarians have been grouped together as the Visegrad club. Thanks to Mr Meciar's pugnacious style of rule, Slovak hopes of making the EU grade alongside their neighbours appear blown.

Asked whether Slovakia will be in the first group of former communist countries to join the EU, a senior German official simply says: "Of course not."

The EU and the US have already taken the highly unusual step of publicly singling out Slovakia for censure, voicing alarm at Mr Meciar's possible anti-democratic and anti-constitutional conduct.

The core of the crisis is Mr Meciar's unremitting campaign to topple President Michal Kovac, a former ally turned foe who, in March last year, played a key role in bringing down the prime minister's government only to see him bounce back in elections.

Ever since, Mr Meciar has borne a grudge, and there seems little he will not do to bring down the president and sully his name.

This summer, the president's son, also called Michal, was abducted in Bratislava, soaked with drink, stuck in the boot of his car, driven across the border into Austria and dumped. He has remained there ever since. He was picked up by the Austrian police who checked out his case and found that the German authorities had issued an international arrest warrant for alleged fraud.

The incriminating evidence came from a Slovak living in Bavaria believed to be a former Czechoslovak communist secret policeman.

President Kovac insists the murky events are nothing but a Meciar-inspired campaign of character assassination. Opposition leaders and Western diplomats are convinced the abduction and ensuing investigation were orchestrated by the Slovak Intelligence Service (SIS) run by Ivan Lexa, a Meciar crony.

The plot thickens. The police investigator in the case was sacked after becoming interested in the role of the SIS. His successor met the same fate after trying to detain three SIS agents. An independent journalist investigating the case was beaten up by unknown assailants. So was the opposition politician, Frantisek Miklosko, after warning that Slovakia was becoming a police state. A mystery explosion destroyed the car of Michal Kovac junior's Bratislava lawyer.

The president's son is now living in seclusion in Austria after being released on bail. Last week, his father demanded that Slovakia's government try to bring him back to the country, in vain.

Mr Meciar's mouthpiece newspaper, Slovenska Republika, published a facsimile of what it claimed was a £1.4 million credit to President Kovac's account with a Viennese bank. Both the president and the bank itself denied he had an account there. The date on the slip was an Austrian bank holiday.

With suspicions raging of a cover-up and repeated secret police foul-ups, the investigation's headquarters was transferred from Bratislava to Banska Bystrica, a Meciar stronghold.

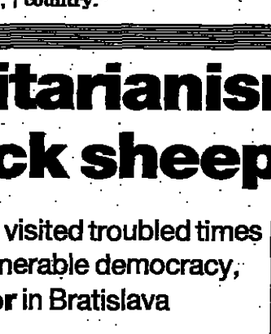
Ladislav Pittner, an opposition politician and former interior minister, says the SIS under Mr Lexa is being deployed to combat "the enemy within" with the help of the former communist security apparatus. President Kovac also complains that Mr Meciar follows the old communist tactics of "whoever is not with us is against us".

The constitutional court, outside Mr Meciar's control, has resisted him and is the latest to feel the brunt of the prime minister's wrath.

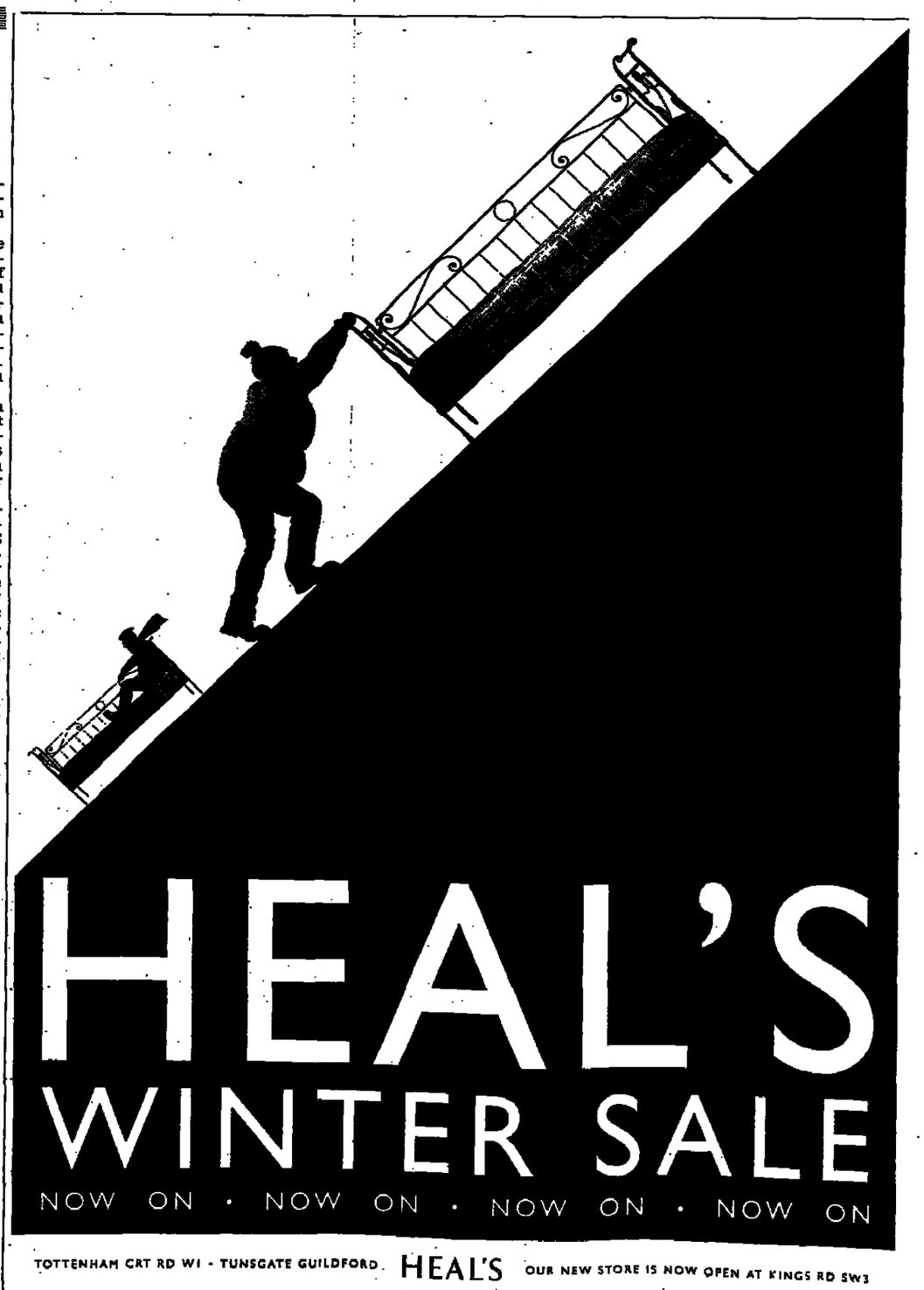
One of Mr Meciar's first moves on regaining power last year was to set up a parliamentary commission investigating the president's role in toppling him the previous March. Mr Meciar had been heading a minority government and was eventually felled by a no-confidence vote.

He has called the event a putsch, and his party has threatened Mr Kovac with trial for "high treason". The court, which operates by simple majority, has just ruled that the parliamentary commission is unconstitutional. Mr Meciar is now threatening to change the law to require a 60 per cent majority on rulings against the government.

With the opposition in disarray, Mr Meciar controls parliament, the government and state television. If he manages to unseat the president and tame the supreme court, West European fears of creeping authoritarianism will be that much more justified — and Slovakia's prospects of joining the EU that much more distant.



Slovakia's ills stem from the campaign by Vladimir Meciar (left) to topple President Michal Kovac



Her hair is prematurely grey, her family ostracised, but Bhanwari Devi, community worker, still wants justice from the men who raped her, reports **Suzanne Goldenberg** in Bhateri, Rajasthan

Lonely struggle of an Indian heroine who spoke up

FOR the men who matter in the village of Bhateri, Rajasthan, evil comes in the shape of a stooped and painfully thin woman with a rough woollen shawl over her head.

She is Bhanwari Devi, a government community worker, whose determination to punish the two men she accuses of raping her has made her a heroine of Indian activists. She has won awards for bravery and led the Indian delegation to the Beijing women's conference.

But others feel extremely uncomfortable with a living reminder of the brutality of everyday life for a lower-caste village woman.

Bhanwari Devi lost the latest round in her three-year legal battle last month, but she is not disheartened. A judge in Jaipur acquitted the men of rape, saying it was a crime only committed by teenagers and not by middle-aged village notables of the type she had accused.

"He wasn't using his head," says Ms Devi, adding that she will appeal.

But her determination is rivalled by the fierceness of her opponents. The acquittal of the five men accused in connection with the 1992 attack was a signal for her enemies to come into the open. Earlier this month, Ms Devi says four villagers attacked her and tried to strangle her. Others are allegedly conspiring to steal a plot of land.

Local police do not seem overly concerned. Vijay Kumar Yadav, the police chief in Bassi 15 miles away, recorded a complaint, but accused Ms Devi of lying.

"There is no truth in Bhanwari Devi's past rape case, or in this assault case," he says. "Today you will not find any women being abused in our villages. But because Bhanwari Devi is taking help from outsiders like these women activists, she is creating terror in the village. That is the terror: the terror of Bhanwari Devi."

Bhateri itself hardly looks like a village under siege. Men belonging to the dominant Gujjar caste bask in the mid-morning sun, their fields tended by others.

Their opinion of Ms Devi changes with bewildering speed. "She's always been a bad character, even before she married in her own village she was known as a fighter," says Gyarsi Lal Gujjar, one of those aquitted of the rape. He pauses for breath. "Before all this, she was like a daughter to me, I always had a great deal of affection for her."

When that affection evaporated, Ms Devi's family also suffered. Her husband, Mohan Lal, the village potter, says people hesitate to say hello in public. Her younger son, Mukesh, says he has no friends in the village.

But until her troubles started, Ms Devi used to visit almost every one of the 200 homes in the village as a grassroots worker, or *sathin*, in the Rajasthan government's Women's Development Programme. The *sathins*, literally friends, were recruited a decade ago to pass on information about health care and education to other village women. There was one *sathin* in each village, each receiving 21 days of training and a monthly stipend of 250 rupees a month, less than £5.

In 1992, government officials launched a campaign against child marriage, a custom which is still practised in Rajasthan although outlawed 60 years ago.

One of the richest men in the village was getting ready to marry off his daughter, aged one, to a bridegroom, aged two. When he failed to listen to Ms Devi's entreaties, she called in the police — on government instructions. The family was outraged.

Soon after, Ms Devi and Mohan Lal were attacked and beaten by five men of the village, and she was raped by two of them.

Activists say the rape of lower-caste women is not uncommon in villages but generally goes unreported because of shame, or fear.

"I think rape in Bhanwari's case was a form of revenge, because socially her *izzat* (honour) is so important to her position — that's what everyone pays obeisance to," says Naina Kapur, an activist lawyer in New Delhi.

But Ms Devi defied tradition, and reported the assault. "If it is a question of their prestige, it is also a question of my respect — why should I keep my mouth shut?" she says. "A lot of people are saying: 'She should have kept quiet and not given everyone a bad name in the village and in Rajasthan'. But I'll fight to the end."

In the process, she has become a symbol of empowerment, and of a new breed of Indian activist. Married at an age so young she cannot remember, Ms Devi had her first child at the age of 13 or 14. Although she married her own daughters off as children, she points out that was before she became a *sathin*. Her youngest, Rameshwari, is still studying, one of only two girls from the village at secondary school.

And after all the furore, Ms Devi is still a *sathin*, although she doubts she can be as effective as before. "I am full of apprehension now," she says. "If I can't get justice for myself, then how can I help them?"

Nowadays, she ministers only to the very poorest women who live outside the main village. People here are happy to be part of her latest scheme, a savings club whose members each pay in 50 rupees a month to be invested later. "We have to progress, we have to move ahead," says Rama, one of the members.

"We aren't afraid," adds Kailash, another village woman. "We live far away and, if she is not afraid, why should we be afraid?"

Activists involved in the original training of the village *sathins* blame Ms Devi's suffering on the government, saying it expected too much of grassroots workers.

"If you persuade people to change, then the results are very slow, but the government was very impatient — they wanted to see results very quickly," says Mamta Jaitley, who helped recruit Ms Devi nine years ago. "If you raise such issues, you are bound to be isolated."

And Bhanwari Devi herself recognises this predicament. Earlier this week, her face and prematurely grey hair half-hidden by her shawl, she spoke to delegates at India's annual women's studies conference.

"Is there anyone who doesn't know who Bhanwari Devi is?" the moderator asked. Not a hand went up.

Ms Devi says: "I am alone in Bhateri village, but I am not alone in India. So many people in India are giving me moral support and affection."

But while her life has been transformed in some ways, in others it remains the same.

She, her husband and children still wear the faded old clothes of the poor and work their own field. And, despite all the attention from women's groups, nobody has taught her to read or write.

A question of honour . . . Bhanwari Devi has become a symbol of lower-caste empowerment, and of a new breed of Indian activist PHOTOGRAPH: A JAIETLY

Delhi still hunting arms dropped from Russian-made plane

THE Indian government said yesterday that it was still searching for arms dropped by parachute on December 17 from an Antonov AN-26, a Russian-made short-haul transport aircraft, in villages around Purulia, West Bengal.

The aircraft believed to have made the drop was forced down in Bombay on December 23 on a return flight from Phuket in Thailand to Karachi in Pakistan.

India has recovered 231 rifles, seven pistols, 80 anti-tank grenades and 17,000 rounds of ammunition but after interrogating the aircraft's crew concluded there were more weapons to find.

"Seventy AK-47 rifles and eight 9mm pistols are yet to be recovered," India's junior home minister, Syed Sibtey Razi, said.

Six Latvians and a Briton, charged with sedition and conspiracy in connection with the drop, are being held in Calcutta. — Reuter.

SAVE UP TO £60 ON PORTABLE CD SYSTEMS

AIWA NSX-E6 PORTABLE CD SYSTEM
● 20 track programmable CD
● Full remote control
● Digital AM/FM/LW radio with 32 presets
● Detachable speakers. Was £239.99
SCOOP SAVE £60
SALE PRICE £179.99

MATSUI CD66 PORTABLE CD SYSTEM In-store Price £64.99 SAVE £5 EXCLUSIVE £59.99
MATSUI CD77 PORTABLE CD SYSTEM Was £89.99 In-store Price £79.99 SAVE TOTAL OF £15 EXCLUSIVE £74.99
PHILIPS AZ8267 PORTABLE CD SYSTEM Was £139.99 SAVE £10 £129.99
PANASONIC RXDS25 PORTABLE CD SYSTEM In-store Price £149.99 SAVE £20 £129.99
PHILIPS ND7500 PORTABLE CD SYSTEM ● AM/FM stereo radio. ● 3-band graphic equaliser. ● Twin cassette with high-speed dubbing. Was £129.99 SAVE £30 SALE PRICE £99.99

SAVE UP TO £8 ON STEREO RADIO CASSETTES

MATSUI STR525 STEREO RADIO TWIN CASSETTE ● Twin cassette with continuous play. ● FM/AM radio. Was £37.99. Dixons Deal £29.99 EXCLUSIVE SAVE £8
OUTFIT INCLUDES TAPES, BATTERIES AND HEADPHONES
SAISHO STR 291 STEREO RADIO CASSETTE Was £24.50 EXCLUSIVE SAVE £5 £19.50
MATSUI STR 626 STEREO RADIO CASSETTE Was £29.99 EXCLUSIVE SAVE £3 £26.99
SHARP QT 272 STEREO RADIO CASSETTE Was £42.99 SAVE £3 £39.99
HITACHI TRKW 240 STEREO RADIO TWIN CASSETTE Was £54.99 SAVE £7 £47.99

SAVE UP TO £30 ON PERSONAL CD HI-FI

PHILIPS AZ6830 PERSONAL CD HI-FI Was £74.99 SAVE £5 £69.99
SONY D140 DISCMAN Was £89.99 SAVE £5 £84.99
AIWA XP205 PERSONAL CD HI-FI INCLUDES RECHARGEABLE BATTERY £99.99
SANYO CDP350 PERSONAL CD HI-FI EXCLUSIVE DIGITAL ANTI SHOCK £119.99
SONY D832CK DISCMAN WITH CAR KIT Was £159.99 SAVE £30 £129.99
SANYO CDP41 PERSONAL CD HI-FI ● 16 track programmable memory ● Includes rechargeable batteries and built-in charger. ● AC adaptor. Was £89.99. SAVE £10 Dixons Deal £79.99

SAVE UP TO £5 ON PERSONAL HI-FI

PHILIPS AQ6441 PERSONAL HI-FI Was £11.99 EXCLUSIVE SAVE £2 £9.99
SONY WMFX 101 WALKMAN Was £29.99 SAVE £5 £24.99
MATSUI BBTX40 PERSONAL HI-FI OUTFIT Includes carry case and batteries. Was £39.99 EXCLUSIVE SAVE £5 £34.99
AIWA HSTA 353 PERSONAL HI-FI Was £39.99 SAVE £5 £34.99
SONY WMFX 211 WALKMAN WITH DIGITAL RADIO Was £49.99 SAVE £5 £44.99
SONY WMFX415 WALKMAN WITH AM/FM DIGITAL RADIO Was £64.99. EXCLUSIVE SAVE £5 SALE PRICE £59.99

HALF PRICE ACCESSORIES

PHILIPS 8245 ACTIVE MINI SPEAKERS Was £59.99. LARGER STORES HALF PRICE SALE PRICE £29.99
SANYO PH850 HEADPHONES Was £19.99. HALF PRICE SALE PRICE £9.99
MGM E180 VIDEO TAPE 4-PACK Total Separate Selling Price £15 HALF PRICE Dixons Deal £6.99
PHILIPS CD ONE 90 5-PACK Was £7.99. HALF PRICE SALE PRICE £3.99

SAVE UP TO £100 ON CD HI-FI

MULTI 5 PLAY SAVE £100
SONY C195 MULTIPLAY CD HI-FI WITH TURNTABLE Was £449.99. LARGER STORES HURRY! LIMITED STOCKS SALE PRICE £349.99
MATSUI CDM707 CD HI-FI WITH TURNTABLE In-store Price £99.99 EXCLUSIVE SAVE £10 £89.99
SANYO SYS850 CD HI-FI WITH TURNTABLE Was £329.99 SAVE £70 £259.99
AIWA Z1500 CD HI-FI Was £399.99 20% DEPOSIT & 6 DIRECT DEBIT MONTHLY PAYMENTS OF £49.33 SAVE £30 £369.99
AIWA Z1800 CD HI-FI WITH TURNTABLE Was £499.99 12 MONTHS 0% INTEREST 20% DEPOSIT & 12 DIRECT DEBIT MONTHLY PAYMENTS OF £29 SAVE £50 £449.99

HURRY- 3 DAYS ONLY
Present this voucher to take advantage of the savings advertised as a VOUCHER PRICE.
Dixons Discount Voucher

SAVE UP TO £30 ON KARAOKE
ARBITER K300 KARAOKE SYSTEM Was £99.99 SAVE £25 £74.99
ARBITER CDK700 KARAOKE SYSTEM WITH CD GRAPHICS Was £149.99 SAVE £30 £119.99

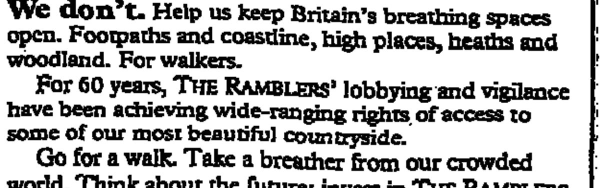
SAVE UP TO £50 ON CD MICRO HI-FI
MATSUI M500R CD MICRO HI-FI In-store Price £99.99 EXCLUSIVE SAVE £20 £79.99
MATSUI M606 CD MICRO HI-FI EXCLUSIVE £149.99
AIWA LCX50 CD MICRO HI-FI Was £229.99 SCOOP SAVE £30 £199.99
SANYO MS5 CD MICRO HI-FI Was £299.99 SAVE £30 £269.99
JVC UXA4 CD MICRO HI-FI Full auto reverse. In-store Price £299.99 SAVE £70 £229.99
AIWA LCX700M MULTIPLAY CD MICRO HI-FI Front Surround Sound. Was £349.99. SAVE £50 SALE PRICE £299.99

SAVE UP TO £100 ON CD MINI HI-FI
SONY MHC701 REMOTE CONTROL CD MINI HI-FI ● 40 watts (RMS) per channel. ● Twin auto-reverse cassette. ● 3-band digital tuner Was £349.99. In-store Price £299.99 SAVE TOTAL OF £80 VOUCHER PRICE £269.99
MATSUI M3000 CD MINI HI-FI Was £219.99. EXCLUSIVE SAVE £20 £199.99
AIWA NSXV20 CD MINI HI-FI Was £279.99 LARGER STORES SAVE £60 £219.99
SANYO DCD12 CD MINI HI-FI Was £329.99. SAVE £70 £259.99
AIWA NSXV30 MULTIPLAY CD MINI HI-FI Was £299.99. FREE SURROUND SPEAKERS SAVE £20 £279.99
AIWA NSXV50 CD MINI HI-FI Was £349.99 9 MONTHS 0% INTEREST 20% DEPOSIT & 9 DIRECT DEBIT MONTHLY PAYMENTS OF £29.24 SAVE OVER £20 £328.99

KENWOOD UD403 PRO-LOGIC CD MINI HI-FI
● 5 speaker Dolby Pro Logic Surround Sound system
● Plays 3 CDs
Was £549.99
LARGER STORES
SAVE £100 9 MONTHS 0% INTEREST MULTI 3 PLAY
SALE PRICE £449.99
20% DEPOSIT & 9 DIRECT DEBIT MONTHLY PAYMENTS OF £39.99

Dixons SALE NOW ON
OVER 350 HIGH STREET BRANCHES NATIONWIDE. TEL: 0181-200 0200 FOR YOUR NEAREST BRANCH
MOST STORES OPEN TOMORROW
Written quotations from Dixons, Department MK, Hemel Hempstead, Herts HP2 7TG

Breathing Space.
(Don't take it for granted)



We don't. Help us keep Britain's breathing spaces open. Footpaths and coastline, high places, heaths and woodland. For walkers.

For 60 years, THE RAMBLERS' lobbying and vigilance have been achieving wide-ranging rights of access to some of our most beautiful countryside.

Go for a walk. Take a breather from our crowded world. Think about the future; invest in THE RAMBLERS.

Join us.

A modest subscription brings you – FREE – the essential Yearbook, full of outdoor information (almost 300 pages, over 2300 places to stay, £4.99 in bookshops); the quarterly magazine, Rambling Today; membership of one of our 380 local groups. Many outdoor equipment shops offer discounts.

Mr/Mrs/Miss/Ms
Address
Postcode Date of birth
Tick box for membership type required
☐ Ordinary £16 ☐ Reduced* £8
☐ Family/joint £20 ☐ Joint reduced* £10 (for two adults at same address)
*Under 18/students/retired/disabled/unwaged
☐ Please send me details of life membership/covenants/direct debits
Donation £____ I enclose £____
☐ We occasionally exchange names (for use once only) with other organisations which may interest you. Tick if you would prefer to be excluded.

The Ramblers
Working for walkers
Registered Charity No.306089
1-5 Wandsworth Road, London SW8 2XX. Tel: 0171 582 6878 GDN16

صكرا من الاهل

No Eden . . . A protester against a background of flames as Tahitians rioted against French tests. Right, Marlon Brando in Hollywood's version of a Pacific idyll during filming of Mutiny on the Bounty

France's poisoned paradise lost

As Paris prepares for its final South Pacific blast Tahitians confront a paradox: they want tests to end but fear the loss of French cash hand-outs. **Andrew Higgins** reports on a crisis of identity

MORT pour La France: under the glower of an extinct volcano, the tombstones march in neat rows up a gentle slope, carrying epitaphs of empire towards an abrupt, chaotic frontier of bougainvillaea and wild tropical shrub. Perched on the fringes of Faaa, a raucous jumble of slum, suburb and beach resort near Tahiti's international airport, the *Cimetière de l'Uranie* struggles to keep up appearances.

Amid exuberant tributes to servants of France's most far-flung colonial adventure stands a more reticent memorial. It offers no consoling epitaph, only bare names carved in black marble. And it is here, each Friday afternoon, that a bitter 65-year-old spinster named Iris Drollet lays bunches of flame-red Tahiti ginger flowers — and mutters curses at Marlon Brando: "He came here with all his money and destroyed everything.

"Tahiti was Brando's little dream, his fantasy. But when it turned bad he wanted nothing to do with it. For him, c'est fini. He doesn't set foot here anymore."

The grave is engraved with the names of her nephew, Dag Drollet, and his lover, Cheyenne Brando. There is no attempt to explain how or why they died. No "*mort pour La France*".

In the case of Dag, the task of trying to make any sense of what happened — a single fatal bullet through his left cheek in 1990 — was left to a court in Los Angeles. Swayed by the elaborate arguments of celebrity lawyer Robert Shapiro (later of O. J. fame) it sentenced Brando's son, Christian, to only 10 years for accidental manslaughter.

How Cheyenne came to be entombed at the age of 25 is more straightforward. She hanged herself on Easter Sunday with a telephone cord just a few miles down the coast.

But it is not only Brando's Tahiti dream that has turned sour. With a neat symbolism a script-writer might admire, Cheyenne's broken neck beto kened a larger crisis of identity reaching far beyond the personal tragedy of a bloated Hollywood ego run amok.

Four months after Brando's daughter hanged herself in April, Tahiti itself succumbed to a spasm of self-destructive rage, which began in protest at France's resumption of nuclear tests in the South Pacific. Now Tahiti, part of the French overseas territory of French Polynesia, faces a new trauma: the end of the tests. Defence officials in Paris yesterday confirmed that it would carry out one more Pacific test in its series of six before the end of February. What Tahitians wonder, does their post-nuclear future hold?

The initial protest started just down the road from the cemetery with a sit-in on the airport runway. It ended with French troops called in to halt a frenzy of looting and violence. On television screens around the world, images of paradise gave way to pictures of rampaging mobs, fire-gutted buildings and terrified tourists.

"What happened to Cheyenne is happening to Tahiti," says Daniel Pardon, editor of the local paper, La Dépêche de Tahiti, and a former spokesman for the Brando family. "Take a disorientated young woman and shower her with money and you get Cheyenne. Do the same to confused and unstructured society and you get Tahiti."

AND nowhere is more mixed up than Faaa, a hodgepodge of squalid shanty town and walled suburban compounds three miles along the seafront from the Tahitian capital of Papeete.

"*Danger de Mort*," warns a sign attached to the chain-link fence of the French military camp not far from the cemetery. A translation renders gives the same message in Tahitian.

Apart from the tropical foliage, the main road, built to ferry tourists to and from the nearby airport, could be the shopping street of a slightly rough neighbourhood just about anywhere in France. But turn down a dirt track and France and its language vanish in a heap of metal shelters, battered thatched huts and fetid beer halls clogged with jobless Polynesian youths.

"The young people worry me. They are not the same. They are aggressive, not like before. Perhaps it is just a new generation," says George Pittman, pastor of the evangelical church. More than half the population is under the age of 20.

"They are very angry and very confused. I hear them shouting and screaming. This is the most dangerous bomb for us, not the atom bomb."

The mayor and master of Faaa is Oscar Temaru, a soft-spoken former seminary student at the head of an anything but soft-spoken independence movement. He curses France with as much bile as Iris Drollet deploys against Brando.

"They destroyed our country. This used to be an unpolluted paradise. Now it is known around the world as a polluted place," he says. "Who polluted it? The French government. It makes no difference whether they are socialist or rightwing. They are all the same. They are all guilty."

He holds regular anti-French rallies in front of a memorial built by his supporters to honour those not mentioned in the *Cimetière de l'Uranie*. It reads: "To the memory of the heroes of Faaa killed in 1844 in combat against French soldiers."

BUT the stark limits of his authority are clearly visible from his mayoral office window. Behind a wire fence runs the runway of Tahiti's airport, the starting point for September's riots but now back in service as a staging post for a faltering tourist industry and a booming nuclear archipelago of military and research installations across French Polynesia.

It is all a long way from the sunny scene that greeted the first Frenchmen to visit Tahiti in 1768.

As their ship neared the coast after six months at sea, a topless Polynesian girl paddled alongside in a canoe. She climbed on to the deck, untied her sarong and stood stark naked under the delirious gaze of the crew.

"I thought I was transported into the Garden of Eden," recorded the vessel's captain, Louis Antoine de Bougainville.

In that moment stirred a steamy fantasy that would launch a thousand cruise ships, bewitch artists, actors and poets, and, in a final spasm of anything-goes abandon, impregnate the South Pacific with the poison of 190 French nuclear blasts.

More than 11,000 miles from Paris, Tahiti became a guilt-free zone, a distant playground bound by no taboo. Paul Gauguin, stockbroker turned painter, could take a 14-year-old lover; Marlon Brando and the rest of an MGM film crew could indulge themselves with a gusto rare even in Hollywood; and Jacques Chirac could ignore the censure of the world to assert France's nuclear virility.

De Bougainville, honoured by the eponymous tropical flower, is today remembered in official history as Tahiti's heroic founding father. His portrait hangs in the office of the French High Commissioner on *la rue du Général de Gaulle*; his bust, disfigured by an anti-nuclear sticker, looks out to sea from a palm-fringed waterfront of Papeete, the capital of French Polynesia.

But there was little romance in the way France first secured Tahiti as a full colony. After a century of imperial sparring across the South Pacific with Britain, it bribed Tahiti's drunken king, Pomare V. In 1880, he signed away his kingdom in return for a 5,000 franc-a-month pension.

"From the start we have been bought like cheap hookers," says Nelson Ortas, the fiery American-educated lieutenant of Oscar Temaru.

But the real problem was never money itself but the deception and dislocation that came with it. When MGM moved here in 1961 to film its remake of Mutiny on the Bounty it spent vast amounts of money to blur reality so as to make Tahiti fit Hollywood's own vision of what paradise ought to look like. Aghast to find black sand on a beach chosen for shooting, producers hired lorries to transport white sand from across the island. Confronted with the rotting, stained teeth of the film's Tahitian extras, MGM ordered 5,000 pairs of temporary dentures. In all, it spent more than $20 million.

No sooner had MGM left than French scientists, soldiers and contractors poured in with even more cash to establish the *Centre d'Experimentation du Pacifique* (CEP), France's nuclear weapons testing agency. The first atom bomb was exploded in 1966, 750 miles south-east of Tahiti on a barge moored at Mururoa atoll.

The biggest shock, though, was felt in Tahiti, the largest of 130 islands and atolls scattered across a French-ruled expanse of ocean bigger than western Europe. "When De Gaulle started testing, the French had a choice," says Stanley Cross, laywer and chairman of Tahiti's Human Rights League. "They could either use arms or they could buy us off. They chose the latter. For 30 years we had everything we needed, billions and billions of francs."

Soldiers, civil servants and fortune-hunters stampeded in from Paris. Expatriate salaries were high and taxes all but non-existent. A tiny French population ballooned to more than 20,000. At the same time, Polynesians migrated en masse from remote islands across the South Pacific, many ending up in Faaa.

Again, problems were rarely solved, only masked. The transfer of France's nuclear tests to the South Pacific from the less docile French territory of Algeria meant another bonanza for false teeth merchants. Like MGM, foreign legionnaires gave them to their dentally-disadvantaged girlfriends — and demanded them back when they left.

Much the same methods were employed to conceal the scars of testing itself: thick layers of concrete and asphalt now smother contaminated coral on Mururoa — or "place of the big secret" in local dialect.

The biggest secret was never the tests, but their consequences. Greenpeace has documented dozens of cases of illness. Fifty-six former test-site workers recently signed a letter alleging a French colonial cover-up. But denied access to full medical records and Mururoa itself, anti-nuclear activists have never entirely disproved French claims that an increase in cancer cases is the result of an increase in the consumption of tobacco and alcohol.

To keep the French flag flying over the less truculent patches of French Polynesia and French nuclear bombs exploding at Mururoa, Paris now pumps in nearly £1 billion a year. Government long ago replaced fishing as the main industry: around 40 per cent of the workforce draws a state salary.

"France has a special conception of the mission she must accomplish in her overseas territories," intones Gaston Flosse, regional president and a close friend of Jacques Chirac. "When Anglo-Saxons discover that something does not work any longer or becomes too much of a burden, you say: sort it out yourselves, we have other, much more important problems at home. France is not the same. It says if you need us, you are citizens just like us, we are ready to accompany you until you ask us to leave."

The heart of the matter, though, is entirely Anglo-Saxon in its crude utilitarianism. And no one knows more about this side of France's "special conception" than Mr Flosse, the son of a French settler and Tahitian mother.

"We have had lots of luck," he says, sitting in an office filled with photographs of Mr Chirac and Charles de Gaulle. "First we had the Bounty. That brought in lots of money. Then we had the CEP. This also brought in money. The question now is where will the money come from once the testing stops?"

His home, a hilltop mansion, looks out across a manicured lawn shaded by a gigantic French flag towards a luxury beach hotel owned by a son. Other family assets include a 19th century hotel in Paris's 16th *arrondissement* and properties in North America.

HOW does a former teacher who has spent his entire career in public service amass such wealth? "I am 64 years old," says Mr Flosse, "I have worked very hard. My wife and children all work. They have all worked very hard. I don't say I'm poor but, *enfin*, if I have succeeded it is because of my hard work and nothing else."

He has been investigated — and cleared — 12 times for corruption. Two new cases are still pending. All accusations of corruption are referred to Paris for investigation. Altogether about 50 local politicians are under investigation for graft of one sort or another. "This may be a part of France but it sometimes operates a lot like Africa," says the state prosecutor, Jean-Pierre Dreno.

The quid pro quo in all this is simple. In return for a steady flow of cash from Paris, Mr Flosse — and each of his predecessors — has given France a free hand to detonate nuclear devices.

"The one thing that is clear is that the tests are not dangerous, either for the environment or the population. You can see how we live in Papeete." Mr Flosse says loyally.

But how do they live just down the road in Faaa? The problem is not simply poverty. There are many poorer places in the South Pacific. France has provided hospitals and schools far superior to anything found elsewhere in the region.

The problem is more that many people "don't know who or where they are anymore," says Mr Dreno. "They have no work . . . they speak Tahitian badly and also speak French badly. They are completely marginal."

Victor Maamaatua, director of a radical radio in Faaa, welcomes the prospect of a cold wind, if that is what independence would bring: "Europeans say we are going to starve if we become independent. I understand why they say this. They don't even know how to open a coconut. But Polynesians know how to survive off the land. I ask another question: how are the foreigners going to eat?"

The prospect of living off coconuts, though, alarms rather than heartens all but the most diehard nationalists.

With probably only one test still to go and France now committed to a comprehensive ban on nuclear testing in 1996, the money-for-favours contract that has both enriched and tormented Tahiti will soon expire. Mr Flosse says Paris has promised funds for a further 10 years.

But how long will France really want to bankroll a paradise lost it no longer needs? For as ex-president Valéry Giscard d'Estaing once muttered contemptuously: "These are expensive little dancers."

'The happiest moments of my life have been in Tahiti. If I've ever come close to finding genuine peace, it was on my island among Tahitians. When I first went there, I foolishly thought I'd use my money to help them.'

Marlon Brando, from Songs My Mother Taught Me

Baalbeck to Palmyra

A 7-night visit to Syria and Lebanon from £595.00

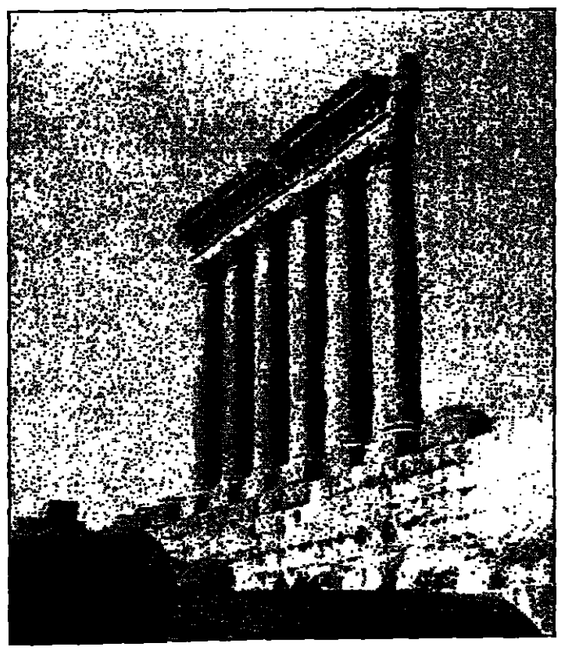
Our newly to be inaugurated flight from London Gatwick to Damascus enables us to offer a comprehensive visit to two of the most important countries of antiquity in the Middle East, which have been little-visited in the recent past. The Syrian section of the itinerary takes in the familiar sites of Damascus, Crac des Chevaliers and Palmyra whilst in Lebanon we visit both the ancient sites of Baalbeck and Palmyra together with a restful two-night stay at Anfe on Lebanon's Corniche. This is without doubt a wonderful opportunity to visit some of the world's most interesting sites.

We reach Damascus in the evening and spend the first night in the oldest living city in the world and the Islamic capital under the Omayyads. Exploration of the city has to be on foot, navigating the tortuous alleys of the old city is wonderful.

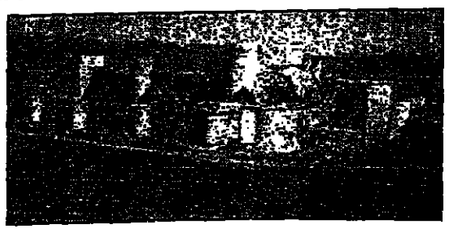
Palmyra is a very special place - the city has colonnaded streets and monumental arches but is perhaps most well known for the Temple of Baal.

The Lebanese are proudly aware that they stand at a historic crossroads. Behind them lies two decades of violence that claimed thousands of lives and brought the country's economy, its shattered capital, suburbs and towns, and even its people, to the edge of anarchy. The civil war and military invasion robbed Lebanon of its prized reputation as the Middle East's market place and the quintessential travel destination.

So now, at long last, it is again possible to visit this most important of countries which has had such a profound effect on the world's civilisations. Its ideal situation at the crossroads of the three continents, Africa, Europe and Asia, and its temperate climate have attracted eminent figures from history - Ramesses II, Sargon, Darius, Alexander, the Caesars, Helagu Khan, Saladin, Tamburlaine and Napoleon. Most have left their imprint, especially at the historical sites of Byblos and Baalbeck.



visiting Damascus, Palmyra, Crac des Chevaliers, the Cedars, Tripoli, Byblos, Beirut, Zhale and Baalbeck



Itinerary

Day 1 Depart by Monarch Airways special flight from London Gatwick to Damascus. Transfer to the Al-Faradis Hotel and stay for two nights.

Day 2 Visit the Omayyad Mosque, Saladin's Tomb and Old City, the Church of Ananais at the end of a Street Called Straight. Walk through the tortuous alleys of the Old City. See the chapel commemorating the lowering down of St. Paul from a window.

Day 3 Depart for Palmyra. In Palmyra we will visit the Temple of Baal, the colonnaded streets, theatre, monumental arches and tombs. Continue to Homs for the night.

Day 4 Drive to Crac des Chevaliers, the residence of the crusader knights Hospitaler. Cross the border into Lebanon via Tripoli to Anfe and the Marina del Sol Hotel which will be our base for the next two nights. Located some 35 miles north of Beirut in the fashionable coastal resort of Anfe, the hotel's features include rooms with ensuite facilities, bar/restaurant and swimming pool.

Day 5 Follow the coast road to Tripoli and visit the citadel, the monumental gateway, the inner courtyard of the Castle of St Giles built by the Franks, and also see the Mosque of Abdel Washed constructed in a delicate Moorish style. Also visit the Khan al-Khajature dating from the Byzantine period. Travelling through the Kadisha Valley arrive at Becharreh and from there travel to the 'Cedars'. At Mt Makhmal visit the Kadisha grottoes through which runs the Holy River. Return to the hotel via Ehden where we will have lunch at Nabeh Mar Sarkis.

Day 6 Travel south to Byblos, whose temples are 4,000 years old. It is still enclosed by ramparts dating 3000 BC and is dominated by the keep of the Frankish castle. In the afternoon a half-day city tour of Beirut will be made taking in the main points. We then proceed to our base for the next two nights, the 5-star Chtoura Palace near Zhale.

Day 7 Travel to Baalbeck. 'City of the Sun'. The acropolis is the largest and best preserved corpus of Roman architecture left. Return in the late afternoon to the hotel for dinner and overnight in Zhale.

Day 8 In the morning depart Zhale for the Lebanese/Syrian border for Damascus airport to catch the return flight to London Gatwick airport.

Departure Dates & Prices

Wednesdays - per person in a twin

1996	
February 14, 21, 28	£630
March 6, 13	£650
March 20, 27	£650
April 3	£675
April 10, 17, 24	£625
May 1, 8	£595
May 15, 22	£595

Mondays - per person in a twin

September 2, 9, 16	£650
September 23, 30	£650
October 7, 14, 21, 28	£650
November 4, 11, 18, 25	£650
December 2, 9, 16	£650
December 23, 30	£695

Supplements

per person

Single room	£175

Price includes: air travel, transfers and road transportation, accommodation on half board, excursions as indicated in itinerary, services of local representative/guides. Not included: travel insurance, airport taxes, visas, tipping, entrance fees. All prices are subject to change.

Important Notes: the sequential order of the tour may sometimes be changed in order to avoid congestion at certain sites.

Travellers should be assured that the Company will constantly monitor the security aspects of travelling in Lebanon.

0171-616 1000

VOYAGES JULES VERNE
21 Dorset Square,
London NW1 6QG

Travel Promotions Ltd. ABTA Y1661 ATOL 1967B

Our offices are open for telephone reservations weekdays from 9am to 5pm and at weekends from 9am to 1pm. For personal visitors, the office is open 9am to 5pm weekdays and 9am to 1pm on Saturdays.

PM pledges new curbs on landlords

Alex Bellos

THE prime minister yesterday signalled his intention to reform arcane property laws that enable "unscrupulous" landlords to exploit tenants.

John Major underlined his commitment to crack down on landlords who demand unjustified service charges and unfairly wriggle out of having to sell their freeholds in an article in the London Evening Standard.

Mr Major wrote: "The case for action on the abuses by a minority of unscrupulous landlords looks strong and we will be responding in the new year."

Calls to give leaseholders more rights over their homes have been increasing in recent months, with campaigns in national newspapers, and an action group handed in a letter to Downing Street two weeks ago.

The Campaign Against Residential Leasehold Abuse, which has 4,000 members, hopes that a new "commonhold" system will replace leaseholds and freeholds.

The Environment Secretary, John Gummer, is looking at a range of options to be contained in the Housing Bill, which is expected to be published early next year. These include:

- Strengthening tenants' right of first refusal when the landlord decides to sell.
- Making it more difficult for landlords to seize flat owners' property.
- Improving leaseholders' right to consultation about necessity of repair work.
- Setting up a "housing court" to police new measures.

Labour would like the Government to go further and give leaseholders the right to manage their own homes. Nick Raynsford, the shadow housing minister, said he also wanted landlords to be fined if they failed to offer their tenants first right of refusal.

He called for the costs of leaseholders who want to buy the freehold to be capped and valuation rules to be made fairer.

Mr Raynsford said: "On the one hand the Government is panicking because leaseholders, who hold a powerful electoral influence in many marginal constituencies, rightly feel betrayed by the Tories and are turning to Labour.

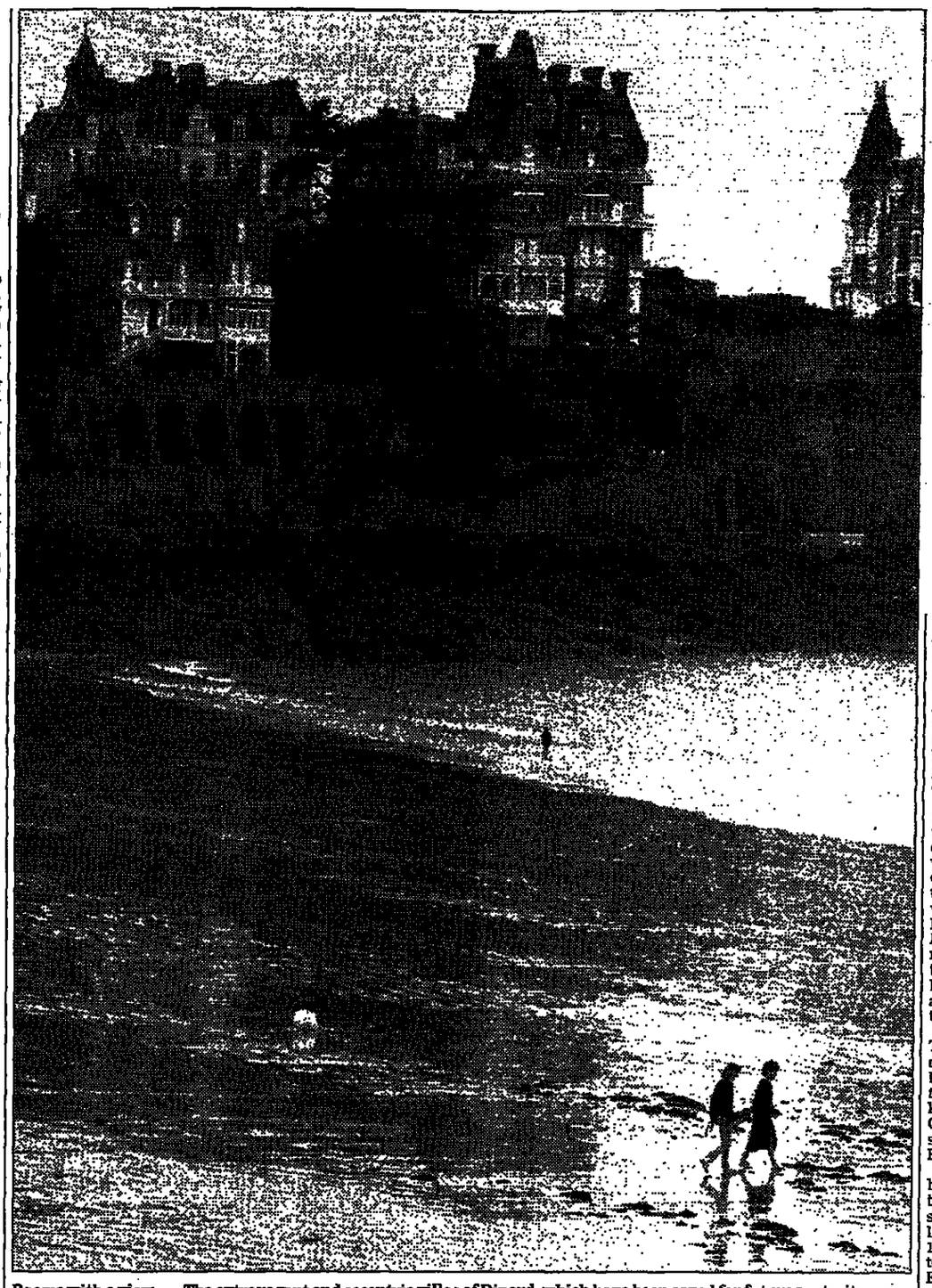
"But on the other hand, John Major is afraid of offending the big landowners, who have traditionally given generously to the Tory party."

The Conservatives are well aware of the potential backlash. The Duke of Westminster resigned from the party because of the Leasehold Reform Act in 1993. Mr Gummer will have to be careful in wording clauses in the bill, to avoid opposition in the House of Lords.

Ron Armstrong, deputy director general of the Council of Mortgage Lenders, said he was delighted with Mr Major's statement.

"We are looking forward to seeing the draft legislation," he said. "The 1993 Leasehold Reform Act helped but turned out to be too complex, and rather expensive for groups of flat owners to buy their own blocks. If they get it right now it will be good news for all leaseholders."

Most of the country's 1.1 million leaseholders are concentrated in London and the South coast, but flat owners all over England and Wales are also vulnerable to rogue landlords.



Rooms with a view . . . The extravagant and eccentric villas of Dinard, which have been saved for future posterity, were built in the 1850s to attract British and American tourists to the resort PHOTOGRAPHS: RARY ROBERTS, DAVID MARTYN HUGHES

French preserve cliff-top follies in a very British seaside resort

Paul Webster in Paris

DINARD, the most British of French seaside resorts, has classified 407 extravagant and eccentric mansions, castles and houses overlooking the Baie de Rance in Brittany in an unprecedented move to preserve an historical coastline.

There are only 800 buildings in the town overlooking the fortified walls of St Malo on the other side of a causeway which hides France's only tidal electricity generator. But the holiday villas, with names such as Napoli, Belle-Rive, Roche-Brune and La Sapinière, represent the most comprehensive legacy of the belle époque craze for British-style bathing centres along the Channel and Atlantic seaboard.

While rivals such as Le Touquet were badly damaged during the second world war, Dinard has kept most of its treasures intact. It has acknowledged a debt to cross-Channel influence by sponsoring an annual festival of British films.

Marius Mallet, the mayor, has campaigned for an all-embracing preservation order since failing to stop the demolition of the Villa Crystal in 1977. The weird glass palace, topped by a small model of the Eiffel Tower, was destroyed to build flats although it was considered the most unusual of a bizarre collection of wealthy houses built on the cliffs.

"We can now get on with planning the orderly development of Dinard, which still depends largely on British holidaymakers," Mr Mallet said. "One of the first projects is to open a museum recalling the creation of French seaside resorts."

Most of the villas were built between 1850 and 1914 to attract the British and Americans when Dinard was considered the most important seaside resort in the country. But it was a Lebanese financier, Rochaid Dahdah, who ensured international recognition by buying half the town and building the spectacular Villa des Deux-Rives and the workers' cottages, which give the centre the look of a Breton fishing village.

Another 100 villas were built by Albert Lacroix, Victor Hugo's publisher, and others owe their origins to exiled Russian princes, American millionaires and minor European royalty.

Like so many resorts in France, its prosperity depended largely on the presence of the Empress Eugénie whose villa is now the town hall. In 1868 she was scheduled to inaugurate the medical centre and casino, but Napoleon refused to let her take her pet dog. While the nobility awaited her arrival, she went off in a huff to Biarritz.

Fight to untangle leaseholders from loopholes in the legal web

BRITAIN'S feudal system of property ownership has long attracted calls for reform, *writes Alex Bellos*. The division of properties into freeholds and leaseholds creates a situation where leaseholders, who live at the premises, are at the mercy of the freeholders, who own them.

Most frustration with the law is caused by landlords who make excessive service charges and inflated repair bills. Rogue landlords are also able to thwart leaseholders' attempts to buy the freehold by using complex legal loopholes.

The 1987 Landlord and Tenant Act went some way to giving rights to leaseholders by giving them first right of refusal when the freehold came up for sale. The freeholder must give leaseholders at least two months to register their interest.

It also required landlords to send tenants full information about major works to be done at least a month before work started.

But the law failed to stop the worst abuses, so the Leasehold Reform Act was introduced in 1993. This offered "collective enfranchisement" designed to enable flat owners to combine and force landlords to sell freeholds. It also gave individual tenants the right to buy an extended 90-year lease as well as the remaining period of the old lease.

A survey last month by the Leasehold Enfranchisement Advisory Service said that the complexity of the act was enabling landlords to evade it. One tactic popular among landlords expecting to be forced to sell is to embark on major building works, draining the tenants' funds.

Leaseholders are also frightened off by the legal bills they have to pay when trying to buy the freehold.

Peter Ward, of property solicitors Trowers and Hamlins, said: "The majority of leaseholders are not aware of their rights. Those that are are often not confident. The landlord is likely to have far greater financial resources. The tenant feels like David against Goliath."

Nigeria opens media fightback

Gary Younge

THE Nigerian High Commission in London has launched a high-profile media campaign to repair the country's international reputation and discredit those Nigerians seeking asylum for fear of political persecution at home.

In a full page advertisement due to appear in The Guardian on Tuesday, the High Commission draws attention to the recent case of Ade Onibiyo, a 20-year-old Nigerian asylum seeker who was given a last-minute temporary stay of deportation this month.

The media campaign marks an extraordinary effort on behalf of General Sani Abacha's military regime to rehabilitate itself within the international community following its execution of the pro-democracy activist Ken Saro Wiwa and eight others in November, in defiance of protests from the Commonwealth and political leaders and human rights organisations around the world.

Mr Onibiyo says his father, Abdul, a pro-democracy activist, has not been heard of since he was deported from Britain to Nigeria nine weeks ago. Ade Onibiyo and his family believe that if their father is still alive, he is in the hands of the military regime. Mr Onibiyo fears he will suffer the same fate. "I fear I might be killed. The man [General Abacha] has already demonstrated his harshness."

But in its advertisement, the Nigerian High Commission disputes the claim that Mr Onibiyo was politically involved and denies that he is being held by the country's security services. "Extensive inquiries made in Nigeria have shown that Mr Onibiyo was never on the Nigeria police wanted list for any crime or any offence treasonable to the Nigerian state."

It accuses the Onibiyos of being unpatriotic, damaging Nigeria's image.

The Home Office minister, Ann Widdecombe, has supported Mr Onibiyo's deportation on the grounds that there was no evidence that his father had "come to grief".

But Labour's foreign affairs spokesman, Tony Lloyd, said the statement was staggering "when they don't have a clue what has happened to him".

German porn crackdown hits worldwide Internet

Martin Linton

AN AMERICAN company has barred worldwide access to 200 sex discussion forums yesterday after action by the German courts. The action was started by the Munich prosecutor against the Ohio-based CompuServe Inc on the basis of evidence that some of the forums were distributing child pornography.

CompuServe reacted with what some see as excessive zeal by closing access to all the alternative sex forums that operate under names like alt.sex.fetish and alt.sex.erotica. Some verge on the illegal with names like alt.sex.binaries.erotica.children.

Because of the nature of the Internet, the ban has to be applied worldwide to CompuServe's four million users in 140 countries, prompting a rash of complaints from American users.

The ban raises the issue of how far people exercising their freedom of speech on the Internet can be or should be subject to the national laws of other countries.

Leader comment, page 14; Perils of scissors, page 17

Exploding toilets get the bum's rush by angry Bronx residents

Ian Katz in New York

RESIDENTS of the Bronx are used to the daily perils of life in New York's most violent borough, but nothing in the crime statistics has prepared them for the latest hazard: exploding toilets.

In what one lawyer has called an epidemic of exploding toilets, two residents of a Bronx housing complex have filed lawsuits claiming they were injured by toilets which blasted apart when flushed.

"It's a miracle someone has not been severely injured or killed," said Brian O'Dwyer, who represents a 55-year-old woman and a 10-year-old boy who were both allegedly hurt in seperate toilet conflagrations.

The woman, Violeta Rivera, suffered cuts when her toilet bowl allegedly shattered on November 20, spraying her bathroom with shrapnel-like shards of porcelain.

"It was like a bomb," she told reporters. "I thought the whole house was blowing up." She is seeking $3 million ($1.3 million) in damages from the Parkchester Management Corporation, which maintains the complex, for failing to warn residents of the danger.

Mr O'Dwyer is also seeking $100,000 for Philip Garner, aged 10, who he says was traumatised when his toilet blew up the same day. He claims a six-year-old girl was badly cut in a separate incident.

The cause of the new onslaught on the innocent performance of bodily functions remains in dispute. Mr O'Dwyer says his experts blame a dangerously high level of water pressure created by a new kind of water-saving toilet introduced into many of the flats in the Bronx complex.

But Edward Watkins, president of the Parkchester South Condominium Board, which authorised the installation of the new toilets, disputed Mr O'Dwyer's diagnosis. If water pressure was the problem, he told the New York Times, "we'd have toilet bowls going off all over the place".

An increasing number of the middle classes are adopting the employment pattern that so alarmed the Victorians about the lumpen proletariat: the east London poor, for instance, who so disturbed Mayhew in the 1880s because they were jacks of all trades, willing to turn their hand on a daily basis to whatever was going.

If you'd like to know more about our unique whiskey, write to us for a free booklet at the Jack Daniel Distillery, Lynchburg, Tennessee USA.

OF ALL THE HATS in Jack Daniel's Hollow, this one earns the most respect.

It's our whiskey taster's hat and only a handful wear it. They're the folks who check to see that our Tennessee Whiskey is properly mellowed and ready for bottling. (We'll run the entire batch back through 10 feet of hard maple charcoal if they say it's not smooth enough.) If you haven't called for Jack Daniel's lately, we hope you will soon. Next to the men who wear this hat, you're the most important whiskey taster of all.

JACK DANIEL'S TENNESSEE WHISKEY

Howard tour to explain asylum cuts

Patrick Wintour, Chief Political Correspondent

THE Home Secretary Michael Howard yesterday started a two-week tour of India and Pakistan to review the granting of visas and to explain his plans to cut the number of asylum seekers from the two countries.

He will also offer help to reduce the trade in heroin to Britain.

Home Office officials insisted Mr Howard was not travelling to the two countries to justify the Asylum and Immigration Bill.

Mr Howard insisted he had *not had any representations* from the two governments about the bill.

India and Pakistan are on the white list of seven countries designated in the bill as not posing a serious risk of persecution. Appeals by asylum seekers from the two countries will be subject to a fast track procedure, expected to take 10 days.

Mr Howard said on BBC Radio's *Today* programme that asylum claims from such countries were generally not well founded, though each would continue to be treated on its merits.

Applicants from India and Pakistan will have the right to appeal to an independent adjudicator, but no right of appeal to the Immigration Appeal Tribunal.

Last year there were 2,030 asylum applications from India. Five were granted asylum by independent adjudicators and 30 were given exceptional leave to remain. There were a further 2,380 applications in the first nine months of this year.

Last year 1,810 applied for asylum from Pakistan, of whom five were granted asylum and 25 were given exceptional leave to remain. In the first nine months of this year, 2,130 applied for asylum.

Mr Howard said both governments "understand the pressures we are under and they do not want to do anything to encourage bogus asylum seekers".

Past life . . . A visitor to the Museum of London contemplates a puppet of Izaak Caltrop, a 17th-century London sedan chair carrier and 'street scoundrel'. He will be brought to life at the museum today and tomorrow by puppeteer Stephen Wisdom who made the puppet in rubber and performs the piece he also scripted PHOTOGRAPH: DAVID SILLITOE

News in brief

Meningitis kills boy sent home by hospital

A FIVE-WEEK-OLD boy died of meningitis hours after being sent home from a hospital casualty unit in Northern Ireland late at night, it was revealed yesterday. Wendy Smith of Londonderry woke a few hours later to find her son Ryan dead in bed beside her.

Ms Smith said her pleas to have Ryan admitted to Altnagelvin hospital were ignored. "I was just turned away as a fussy first-time mother. They thought I was overreacting but I knew something was very wrong. I can't describe what it was like to wake up and find Ryan dead beside me. I haven't heard from the hospital but nothing they could say or do would help now."

Ms Smith first became worried about Ryan on the evening of the Thursday before Christmas and called out her GP who said he might have meningitis. The couple took the baby to the hospital where a doctor told Ms Smith to go home and return next day if his condition had not improved.

She and boyfriend Paul Boreland are due to meet hospital authorities next week. A hospital spokesman said yesterday: "The baby was seen by a doctor and the doctor, from his diagnosis, didn't believe there was a problem." A coroner's inquiry is to be held but, said the hospital, no internal inquiry.

DC accused of kerb crawling

A DETECTIVE has been suspended amid allegations that he propositioned two women in a red light district who turned out to be undercover policewomen trying to catch kerb crawlers.

The alleged incident happened in Doncaster while the 40-year-old South Yorkshire detective constable was off-duty. It is understood he approached the women separately.

Chief Supt Brian Mordew confirmed the complaint was being investigated by the force's complaints and discipline department and the officer could face criminal charges. "I can confirm that a detective constable based at Doncaster has been suspended pending the investigation of a criminal offence."

BBC French ends

A BBC tradition of broadcasting in French to listeners across the Channel which goes back to before the second world war ends at midnight on New Year's Eve. The final BBC World Service programme in French is being withdrawn to help save money.

The first BBC broadcasts to Europe in French were made in September 1938 at the time of the Munich crisis. General de Gaulle made his historic rallying call to the French Resistance in 1940 on the BBC.

Direct broadcasts have gradually been withdrawn and the last remaining service, BBC Infos, which offered a 24 hour feed of news and music via satellite from London to 100 radio stations in France, is now to go. BBC World Service broadcasts to France in English and French broadcasts to Africa remain.

Child sex case minister dies

A BRITON accused of publishing international guides for child molesters has died before standing trial in Belgium, according to sources involved in the case.

John Stamford, 56, a former church minister, was scheduled to answer charges brought by children's rights groups alleging he provided information on child prostitutes to pedophiles around the world. It is believed that he died on Wednesday of a heart attack in hospital near his home in northern Belgium.

"His death will probably mean the end of all judicial action," said Bernard Boeton, an official of Terre des Hommes (Land of Mankind), one of the organisations pressing charges. "We regret it because we wanted to make an example of him."

Last April a local court in the small northern town of Turnhout ruled it was not competent to judge Stamford. It said he should face a jury at a higher court on charges of offending public morals and publicising sexual exploitation. According to the prosecution, Stamford used a homosexual travel guide called Spartacus as a front for a mailing service offering information on child prostitution in Thailand, Brazil, the Philippines and other nations.

Stamford had denied the child sex charges and claimed to be the victim of an anti-homosexual campaign.

Agents sue conductor

CONDUCTOR and orchestra director Christopher Hogwood is being sued for more than £160,000 by his agents Harrison Parrott. A writ just issued at the High Court claims that Mr Hogwood has breached an agreement the agents claim was made in 1981, when Hogwood appointed the firm as his sole worldwide manager and agent and agreed to pay 15 per cent commission on money paid to him on engagements negotiated by them. No date has been fixed for hearing of the action.

'Priceless' heirlooms stolen

BURGLARS escaped with "priceless" family heirlooms, including the diaries of a chief gunner in Admiral Nelson's fleet and a 280-year-old bible, in a robbery on the home of businessman Gordon Scullard, aged 63, at Whickham, near Gateshead, Tyne and Wear. The three diaries were written in 1818 and chronicle battles at sea and fights with pirate crews. Mr Scullard said the theft was "a loss to the nation".

£150m cannabis bonfire

IRISH police burned a 15-tonne haul of cannabis with an estimated street value of £150 million in the furnaces of a power station in Co Offaly. The drugs were seized in a raid in Co Kilkenny last month and destroyed in a secret pre-Christmas operation. Police believe the drugs may have been intended for the British market.

The Sale of Excellence
BOSCH

"It has always been an unbearable thought to me that someone could inspect one of my products and find it inferior in some way. For that reason I have consistently tried to produce products which can withstand the closest scrutiny, products which prove themselves to be superior in every respect."
Robert Bosch (1861-1942)

Dishwashers
Washing Machines
Refrigeration

SUPERIOR QUALITY
Time Saving Dishwashers

The Quietest, Most Economical Washing Machines & Dryers

SALE £459.99 OFFER
MRP £499.99*

Bosch SMS 6032
Full Size Dishwasher
- Extremely quiet operation
- 6 Programmes
- 3 Cleaning temperatures
- Adjustable top basket
- Quick programme – only 31 mins
- Stainless steel interior
- 12 Place settings

SMS 6012 60cm Dishwasher
- 6 Programmes • 2 Temperatures
- 12 Place settings
£399.99

SPS 5442 45cm Dishwasher • 5 Programmes
- 2 Temperatures • 8 Place settings
- Very quiet • Heat exchanger

SALE £369.99 OFFER

SMS 4472 60cm Dishwasher • 4 Programmes
- 1 Temperature • LED Delay timer
- 12 Place settings
£339.99

MRP £399.99*

WFK 2280 "Exclusiv" Washing Machine
- "3D AquaSpa" wash system (uses less water and electricity)
- Electronically controlled through "Fuzzy Logic"
- 1100 Spin speed
- Very quiet operation
- Delay timer 1-19 hours
- Dual glazed porthole door
- Softline design

SALE £599.99 OFFER

WFF 1800 Washing Machine
- 3D AquaSpa • 900 Spin speed
- Quiet operation • 3 Option buttons
- Fuzzy Logic
£469.99

WFB 2000 Washing Machine
- 800 Spin speed • Half load option
- Rinse hold • Economy option
£339.99

WTA 2000 Tumble Dryer
- Vented dryer with manual timing
- 2 heat options
- Reverse tumble action

SALE £219.99 OFFER
MRP £249.99*

SALE £299.99 OFFER
MRP £329.99*

Super Economical & Environmentally Friendly "Softline" Fridge/Freezers

SALE £649.99 OFFER
MRP £699.99*

Bosch KGU 3201
Fridge Freezer
- "Frost-Free" system
- Totally CFC and HFC Free
- Separate temperature controls
- Fridge capacity 6.8 cu ft (net)
- Freezer capacity 3.6 cu ft (net)

KTR 1670
Larder Fridge
- CFC and HFC free
- 3 height adjustable safety glass shelves
- Auto defrost
- Capacity 5.4 cu ft (net)

KSV 2822 Fridge Freezer
- Totally CFC and HFC Free • 60cm wide
- 4 shelves (3 height adjustable)
- Fridge capacity 6.7 cu ft (net)
- Freezer capacity 2.4 cu ft (net)
£399.99

KSV 2402 Fridge Freezer
- Totally CFC and HFC free • 55cm wide
- 4 shelves (3 height adjustable)
- Fridge Capacity 6.0 cu ft (net)
- Freezer Capacity 2.0 cu ft (net)
£299.99

SALE £349.99 OFFER
MRP £369.99*

GSL 1202 Tabletop Freezer
- Totally CFC and HFC Free
- 4 Star freezer
- Superfast freezing
- Capacity 3.4 cu ft (net)

GSU 2604 Freezer
- "Frost-Free" system • Totally CFC Free
- 5 transparent freezer drawers
- Capacity 7.5 cu ft (net) (Not Softline)
£699.99

Prices may vary from store to store. Prices shown are manufacturers suggested sale prices between 28th Dec 1995 and 31st January 1996.
* Pre-Christmas manufacturers suggested selling price.

BOSCH
Excellence comes as standard

Available from leading department stores and major electrical retailers.
For further information please call for free brochure and local stockist list on 0990 200 660 (24 hours 7 days a week).
Robert Bosch Domestic Appliances, The Quadrangle, Westmount Centre, Uxbridge Road, Hayes, Middlesex UB4 0HD

'Utopian' scheme aims to reverse Clearances and double population by selling estates to multi-skilled modern crofters

US cash to aid 'rebirth' of thriving Highland life

New horizons . . . Ron Greer on the Perthshire estate where, with US finance, he hopes his vision of New Caledonia will soon see hundreds of owner-occupiers PHOTOGRAPH: MURDO MacLEOD

Erlend Clouston charts a 'revolution'

US BANKERS are being lined up for a multi-million pound project which could revolutionise the economy of the Highlands and double the population within a century.

The scheme, centred on an estate in rural Perthshire, could ultimately lead to vast tracts of land which have been empty since the Clearances being worked by entrepreneurial owner-occupiers living in harmony with nature.

New Caledonia, as the experiment is called, is the brainchild of biologists Ron Greer and Derek Pretswell. Their company, Natural Resources Scotland Ltd, was set up to promote the idea in 1987, but it remained a utopian vision until the Perth and Kinross councillors, alarmed at rural depopulation, agreed to back it.

The project has been inspired by the prosperous rural communities of Norway, where economic activity and populations thrive despite geographical and climatic conditions on a par with Scotland's worst.

Mr Greer, a 45-year-old former fish biologist and prize-winning environmental consultant, has already identified a suitable estate — but he won't reveal its identity in case the price shoots up. He has also started talking with US financiers about funding, which could stretch from an initial £3 million up to £50 million.

"They are very serious about investing," he said. "It is amazing how much support there is for doing things for Scotland in America."

Under the plan, an estate of around 20,000 acres will be sub-divided into 50-acre holdings. Like modern crofters, the owners will combine jobs in garages, offices and hotels with their agricultural work.

Sheep will be rationed according to grazing capacity and overwintered in double-glazed sheep huts to produce better quality animals less likely to crop young trees when they are released on to New Caledonia's shared hill land in the spring.

The multi-skilled farmers will also have a stake in a communal forest, where timber will be used as a capital asset and a source of VAT-free fuel. A rich variety of trees, incorporating native deciduous species, will prove attractive to high-spending tourists and new forms of commercially exploitable wildlife such as elk.

The wood will also provide New Caledonians with employment as saw-millers and joiners. "Diversity creates economic opportunity," said Mr Greer, who stressed that his interest was sustainable development, not conservation.

He anticipates his "people's estate" becoming the model for others which would in time challenge the dominance of the 600 landowners who control half the Highlands' 15,000 square miles. Subsidies would still be required, but in the broader context society would gain.

"Surely it is better to have people working productively on the land than stuck in Easterhouse, Glasgow, doing nothing, or getting involved in crime?"

While the population of the Highlands has risen by more than 3 per cent in line with United Kingdom trends since 1981, the figures for the Western Isles, Caithness, Sutherland, Lochaber, and Argyll and Bute show an average decline of 2.4 per cent.

In contrast, the population of the county of Bjerkheim, inland from Stavanger in Norway, has been increasing at 1.5 per cent a year. As well as a cheese factory supplying a quarter of Norwegian production, the county has 32 small industrial processes. The equivalent area of Perthshire has hardly any.

It was statistics like that which shook the economic development and planning committee of the new unitary Perth and Kinross authority when Natural Resources Scotland gave a presentation recently. "Quite honestly, I gave them a pretty hard time, but they still managed to impress everybody," said convener Alex Murray. "The scheme is realistic and overdue."

The crucial element in the equation is ownership. The core problem of the Highlands, as many see it, is that too few people monopolise too much land which they run as sporting estates, often at the expense of local initiatives and the environment.

Ownership provides the farming entrepreneur with collateral to set against bank loans for new businesses and a guarantee that they will not fall victim to what Mr Greer calls the MacGrovel syndrome. "It's that feudal dependency where people say 'Och, the estate'll do that for me, so I'll not bother'."

The New Caledonia project is being advanced at a time when land reform has bubbled to the top of the political agenda in Scotland. Inspired by the crofters of Assynt, who took the risk of buying up their land, other crofters have begun shaking off the MacGrovel syndrome.

Michael Forsyth, the Scottish Secretary, is offering to sell government estates to community trusts — a clear hint to other landowners faced by protected, uneconomic rents and endless maintenance bills.

Brian Wilson, the Labour MP for Cunninghame North and a long-standing advocate of land reform, would like to see the dissolution of the estates accelerated by the establishment of a well-funded Land Commission. This would buy up suitable land when it came on the market and distribute it to appropriate applicants.

The Scottish National Party goes a step further. Its Land Commission would insist that prospective Scottish estate owners actually live full-time on their property.

3 TESSAs

DUE

IN JANUARY.

From January Abbey National will be launching three exciting new TESSAs. The TESSA Collection includes both fixed and variable interest rate options. Whether you have an Abbey National TESSA or not, to find out more, simply drop into your nearest branch or call us free on **0800 100 805,** Monday to Friday 9.00am to 5.00pm or Saturday 9.00am to 1.00pm, quoting reference A372C.

ABBEY NATIONAL®

The habit of a lifetime

W216

For your security and to assist us in improving our service to you we may record or monitor all calls to Abbey National Direct. TESSAs are subject to statutory rules and regulations which may change from time to time and are tax free provided you comply with the conditions of the accounts. Please note that certain eligibility criteria apply. See in branch leaflets for details. Abbey National, the Umbrella Couple symbol and The habit of a lifetime are trademarks of Abbey National plc. Abbey House, Baker Street, London NW1 6XL

Cameras key weapon in fight against crime

Duncan Campbell
Crime Correspondent

CLOSED-CIRCUIT television plays a significant part in cutting vandalism and burglaries in inner city areas, according to a Home Office report, published yesterday.

David Maclean, the Home Office Minister responsible for crime prevention, said: "CCTV is now one of the best crime-cracking tools the police have.

"They are using it to catch thieves, thugs and muggers, to prevent crime and focus police resources more effectively.

"The latest figures show the largest ever fall in recorded crime over a two-year period.

"I am convinced that CCTV has had a role in helping police turn the tables against criminals."

Research was carried out into CCTV schemes in Newcastle, Birmingham and King's Lynn town centres. It showed burglaries down by 56 per cent and vandalism by 34 per cent in central Newcastle. CCTV also enabled police to respond more quickly to assaults and public disorder, and enjoyed widespread public support, with 94 per cent public backing its use.

The report indicates that CCTV should be used as an integral part of a strategy to allow police more flexibility in deploying officers.

In the areas studied, police use CCTV to patrol town centres. The cameras are particularly helpful at pub closing times when fights develop. They can also be used in subsequent court cases for identification purposes.

The Government is heavily committed to CCTV as a crime-fighting strategy. The Home Secretary, Michael Howard, announced last November that £15 million would be made available to areas that could show a need for such schemes.

The money is for groups and local authorities that present the most persuasive arguments for CCTV in their areas. It was announced last month that a further 10,000 cameras were to be installed in high streets.

Critics of the schemes say that they displace crime to areas not covered by CCTV and that it encourages a Big Brother society where everyone is under surveillance. Supporters point to the part played by cameras in the arrest of the two 10-year-old boys who murdered Jamie Bulger in Bootle, Merseyside, in February 1993. Shopping centre cameras showed his abduction.

The Home Office has been publishing "good news" reports on crime prevention initiatives during the traditionally quiet news period over Christmas.

CCTV in town centres: Three Case Studies by Ben Brown. Available from Police Research Group, Room 448, Home Office, 50 Queen Anne's Gate, London SW1H 9AT

Jewish fears over time bill

Madeleine Bunting
Religious Affairs Editor

THE Orthodox Jewish community has voiced objections to the parliamentary bill to bring British time in line with Europe, fearing it will disrupt prayer services.

If clocks are moved forward an hour, as the bill due its second reading early in the new year proposes, many Jews might not be able to attend morning prayers in midwinter. In summer, the sabbath restrictions of no work or travel would not end until after midnight. Some fasts in the religious calendar would also go on past midnight.

The timing of Jewish prayers is determined by the dawn and the sunset. If the clocks went forward, the morning prayers in all Orthodox synagogues would be at 8am, which would not allow sufficient time for worshippers to get to their offices or schools.

A delegation of Orthodox Jewish leaders, led by Eldred Tabachnik, the president of the Board of Deputies, has been lobbying MPs ahead of the British Time (Extra Daylight) bill's return to Parliament next month. The private member's bill has received strong backing because of the likelihood that it would reduce road accidents, although lack of time in the parliamentary timetable means its passage is in doubt.

The board's chief executive, Neville Nagler, is exploring compromises, such as whether facilities could be made available in schools or offices in midwinter for Orthodox Jews to say their prayers. "The Jewish community is undoubtedly concerned," he said. "It will certainly cause some awkwardness for religious observance."

The Orthodox Jewish religious authorities will make a ruling early in the new year. They may decide that the principle of "pikuach nefesh" — saving of life — overrules the objections.

Stricken workers 'won £300m in damages'

EMPLOYEES injured or made ill through work received a total of £300 million in damages and compensation in 1994, with help from their unions, a TUC report showed yesterday.

Legal action was taken on behalf of 126,000 union members, who were given free legal advice and representation against their employers.

Cases included workers injured in assaults, such as mugged bus drivers; staff with long-term occupational diseases, including repetitive strain injury; and dependants of people killed at work due to an employer's negligence.

John Monks, TUC general secretary, said: "Unions are the main hope for justice for people injured at work."

The £300 million included £67,000 to a firefighter injured in a arson blaze and £100,000 to a nurse who injured her back lifting a patient. The 1993 figure was £335 million.

هكذا من الاصل

Year of many fools and four horses

Chris Hawkins, in his review of 1995, tells how on the Flat and over jumps the star performers confounded the Turf experts

NATURALLY, everyone in racing likes to think they know a thing or two about the game, but only a woman can make a bigger fool of a man than a horse and 1995 was a year that confounded many so-called experts.

Thinking back 365 days, it would have been odds against any prognosticator nominating one of the four horses now recognised as the stars of 1995 — Alderbrook, Master Oats, Lammtarra and Ridgewood Pearl.

The champion hurdler Alderbrook had not run over timber since finishing ninth in a Newcastle novices' event in 1993, while Master Oats stood at 20-1 for the Cheltenham Gold Cup, having won his sole race of the season at Chepstow.

Lammtarra, the Derby and Arc de Triomphe victor, had won his only race as a two-year-old, but was in Dubai battling against ill-health.

In Ireland, Sean Coughlan, the owner of Ridgewood Pearl, who runs in the papal colours, was the only man to believe his filly was a world-beater, and only then because he was on his knees each night seeking assistance from above.

No, a year ago the name on everyone's lips was Celtic Swing, the highest rated two-year-old ever, quoted at a miserly 5-1 to land the Guineas-Derby double. As we know now, he was not a wonder horse, just a precocious freak, a bully in the school playground who found the adult world a different ball game.

Perhaps that is a trifle unfair to a horse unsuited by an exceptionally dry summer, which produced weeks of firm ground and accentuated a conformation weakness in his forelegs.

After narrow defeat in the 2,000 Guineas, he missed the Epsom Derby and was rerouted to Chantilly, where yielding ground and his own guts got him home in the Prix du Jockey-Club.

After he disappointed badly in the Irish Derby, ligament damage was diagnosed and it was touch-and-go whether even an operation would enable him to race again.

Veterinary expertise now seems to have pulled him through and Peter Savill, his owner, is planning an ambitious 1996 campaign with the Arc as the colt's major target.

Some might call the millionaire publisher Savill unlucky, but no one with his bank balance could reasonably complain of ill-fortune.

Luck is something which

> *'Celtic Swing found the adult world a different ball game'*

does not seem to enter the equation either when one talks about Sheikh Mohammed's Godolphin set-up.

Given enough resources and expertise any problem can be cracked and, by wintering horses in the Persian Gulf and then keeping them in a private stable here, the Sheikh looks about to revolutionise training methods.

Lammtarra proved a great advertisement for Godolphin. He was near death's door with a respiratory problem in the spring, but won the Derby first time out, followed up in the King George at Ascot and rounded off a short, unbeaten and amazing career with a third Group One success in the Arc, where he had to dig deep to repel a strong French challenge.

It was striking, everytime one saw him, how well he looked. Rather a delicate, elegant chestnut with a finely chiselled head and a parrot mouth, he was turned out in wonderful condition and never failed to take the eye.

Saeed bin Suroor, a former Dubai policemen, was on the race card as his trainer, but Jeremy Noseda (now departed to train in the States) and Simon Crisford were other key men in his preparation, as was Frankie Dettori, his inspirational rider.

Somewhat controversially, Lammtarra was not Racehorse of the Year, that accolade at the Cartier Awards going to Ridgewood Pearl, who rightly got the nod from an exalted panel of experts after a courageous triumph in the Breeders' Cup Mile.

Ridgewood Pearl, a strong, lengthy filly, won five of her six races, including the Irish Guineas, Coronation Stakes and Prix du Moulin. She won on all sorts of ground and had no discernable weakness.

Spectacular as the Flat race victories of Lammtarra and Ridgewood Pearl were, they were rivalled by the imperious display of Alderbrook at Cheltenham in the Champion Hurdle.

He had prefaced that win with just one run at Wincanton where he bolted in. But to take the hurdling crown with such little experience was a mind-boggling effort — not that it surprised those closest to him.

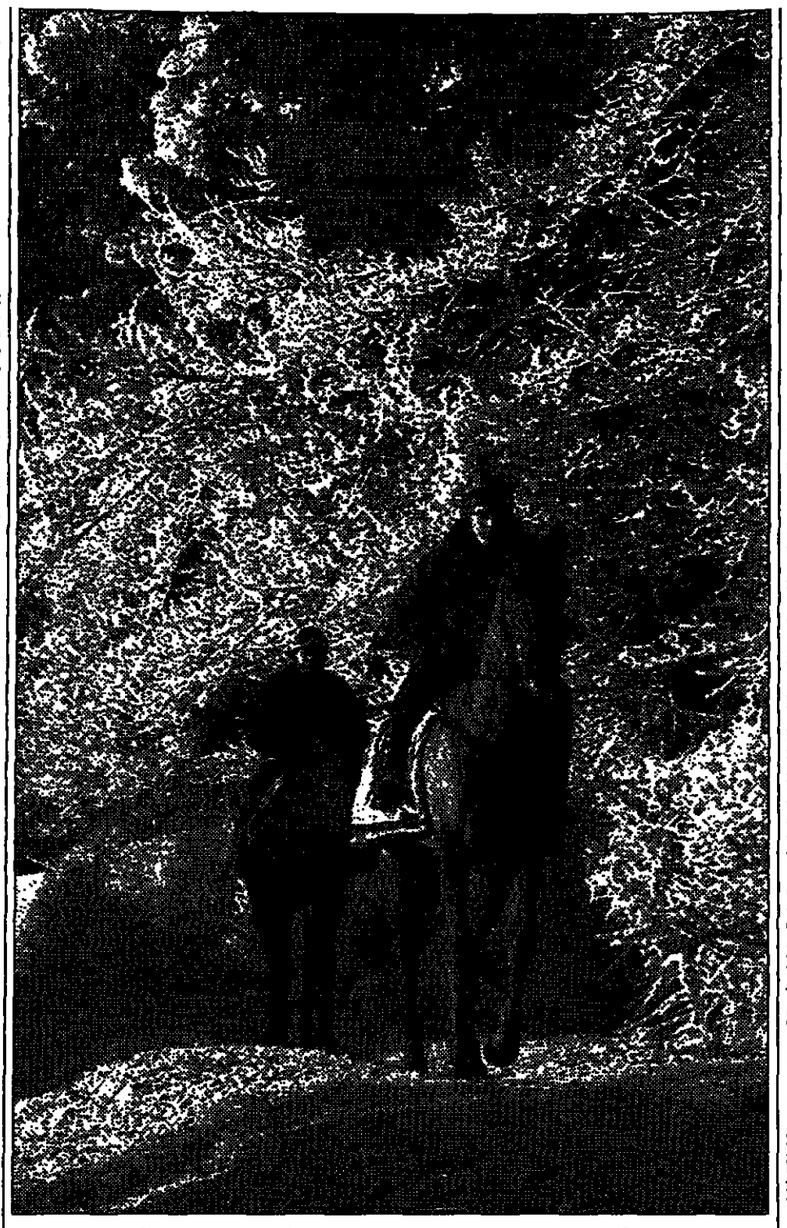
Kim Bailey, his trainer, and half of Lambourn got on him during the spring, some securing odds of 50-1, after he had shown unreal natural talent under the expert guidance of Yogi Breisner.

This man, a former Swedish international eventer now based in Oxfordshire, was popularly described as a "jumping guru" and there was no doubt he knew how to get horses to hop over obstacles.

Confidence was the key and he imbued the previously clumsy Master Oats with it to enable Bailey and jockey Norman Williamson to land an historic Champion Hurdle-Gold Cup double.

Master Oats had overcome leg trouble and the breaking of blood vessels to improve by around four stone in the handicap in two seasons.

He and Alderbrook defied logic, but their immense stature, together with the other two equine giants, made 1995 a vintage year, begging the question — can Alhaarth measure up in '96?



There's hope on the Heath despite the freeze . . .

TURF racing has been frozen off for the fifth day in succession with the cancellation of today's jumping fixtures at Catterick, Folkestone, Newbury and Nottingham, though on wintry Newmarket Heath (above) some trainers were giving their thoroughbreds light exercise, mindful that the Flat season is only 12 weeks hence.

Today's cancellations bring the number of cards lost to the weather this season to 27, but punters should be back in action today when Wolverhampton stage afternoon and evening programmes on their all-weather track.

Prospects are not much better for Monday. None of the seven tracks due to stage New Year's Day National Hunt meetings could have raced yesterday, though a rise in temperature is forecast. Most plan weekend inspections. The other scheduled meeting is Southwell on the all-weather.

Should Cheltenham be forced to cancel their Monday programme, the British Horseracing Board have given permission for the entire eight-race card to be held on Tuesday.

PHOTOGRAPH: DAVID CAIRNS

Walk-over for Wakeham as BHB chair

LORD WAKEHAM, former leader of the Conservatives in both Houses of Parliament, is to become the new chairman of the British Horseracing Board.

After less than a year as a director of racing's governing body, he has been appointed to succeed Lord Hartington, whose term of office ends in June.

Lord Wakeham, 63, joined the board in June as a nominee of the Industry Committee and was the only nominee for racing's top post, which he will hold for four years from June 7.

He said yesterday: "I am delighted and very flattered to be appointed as chairman of the governing authority for British racing.

"I much look forward to building on the very firm foundations which Stoker Hartington has laid since the BHB's launch two and a half years ago and to working closely with all sections of this great sport and industry to help secure its future."

Lord Wakeham's experience in business and politics — he was also a racehorse owner with Stan Mellor in the 1970s — marked him out as a potential chairman once he had won his seat on the main board. However, he expressed the hope that his successor can emerge from within the ranks of the racing industry during his term in charge when adding: "I think this is an important position partly because Stoker Hartington has been such a success in driving the whole thing forward. It is important the BHB now comes to maturity.

"At the end of the day I would like to see the next chairman come from any section of the industry and hope we can produce a man or woman who can do the job.

"Secondly, the finances of the sport are still pretty dodgy in spite of the welcome reduction in betting duty. A lot of things can be done to improve things on a financial basis and not just by looking to the government."

Outgoing chairman Lord Hartington welcomed his successor's appointment. "I am very pleased to be handing over in six months' time to someone of the calibre, experience and commitment of John Wakeham.

"I know that he will prove a most effective chairman as the BHB faces up to the next critical stage of its development."

Simpson returns intending to run Araboybill twice in one day

ROD SIMPSON, back among the training ranks after a 10-month sabbatical, has declared Araboybill at both Wolverhampton's afternoon and evening meetings today.

"He runs in both races," explained Simpson. "And if there was another meeting, I'd run the bastard in that as well! It's been so long since we had a runner that I will send him for anything."

Simpson, whose passage in racing, if never smooth, has always been entertaining, has enjoyed some memorable moments.

An association with big punting owner Terry Ramsden, in a period when Simpson handled the likes of Bajan Sunshine, Brunico, Tangognat and, later, Pinctada and Rouyan, always kept his name to the fore. Up until 10 months ago Simpson was training in Newport, South Wales, but problems with the set-up there forced his hand.

Now, with the backing of businessman Matthew Thole, he occupies Ferdy Murphy's old yard near Taunton.

"Things are going very well here, but it has taken some time to settle in as I was always very happy with everything I had in Wales.

"However, we are looking forward to running Araboybill at both meetings and Faez in the evening. I don't know Wolverhampton that well, but the consensus of opinion was that Araboybill has a better chance in the seven furlongs race in the afternoon than the nine furlongs event at night."

Law can rule if weather relents

Ron Cox

ALL-WEATHER racing is not guaranteed to live up to its name today. Plummeting temperatures have put Wolverhampton in jeopardy, with the scheduled afternoon and evening cards described as "hopeful rather than certain" to beat the freeze.

A statement issued by Wolverhampton last night said: "Following some of the lowest temperatures recorded since the inception of all-weather racing, the management feel it should be emphasised that with continuing extreme cold and snow forecast, the meetings cannot be described as certain to proceed."

Course director Richard Muddle said: "We will continue to work round the clock and are hopeful to stage both programmes. We really need a couple of hours above freezing to be certain.

"Unfortunately it is impossible to make early announcements as we have found overnight problems have been overcome as late as an hour before racing. If the worst comes to the worst we can always move the programme back as the floodlights can come into play."

Today's hastily-arranged afternoon card deserves to succeed, and it would be fitting if the opening race could go to Benjamins Law, already a proven performer on the Fibresand.

With its sharp bends and short run-in, the Midlands circuit favours a certain type of horse and Benjamins Law (12.55) has already won twice over today's extended nine furlongs trip.

Indeed, like others before him who could barely raise a gallop on turf, Benjamins Law has been transformed by racing on the sand. He continues to go up in the weights, but can enjoy another victory before the handicapper catches up with him.

Opera Buff (9.30), who has been an excellent advertisement for Gay Kelleway's training talents, should carry on the good work in the final race on the evening card.

Trained by Martin Pipe on his first six starts this season, Opera Buff has gone from strength to strength for the Kelleway stable, winning his last three races by a total of 21 lengths.

That includes a 10 lengths victory over this course and distance, and even though Opera Buff has shot up the ratings he should still be too much of a handful for the back-to-form Shakiyr.

An even better bet from today's 14 races, though, could be Toujours Riviera (8.30) in the Hogmanay Handicap.

Jeff Pearce's five-year-old ran a promising race on his all-weather debut when third behind Easy Choice and Duke Valentino at Lingfield recently.

That form looks solid. The winner, unbeaten in three starts at Lingfield, is regarded a cut above average and Duke Valentino went on to win a competitive handicap on the Equitrack four days later.

Bailey faces jockey poser

KIM BAILEY is likely to face another difficult search for a replacement jockey if Master Oats, One Man and Coulton all line up for the rescheduled King George VI Chase at Sandown next Saturday.

Jamie Osborne had been booked to replace sidelined jockey Norman Williamson aboard Master Oats for the subsequently abandoned Ericsson Chase at Leopardstown on Thursday.

But he will not be able to ride Bailey's chaser at Sandown as Oliver Sherwood has confirmed Coulton a definite participant and yesterday said: "Jamie rides Coulton — end of story."

Richard Dunwoody's unavailability after his commitment to One Man further complicates matters.

Possible names to consider are Mick Fitzgerald, David Bridgwater and Warren Marston.

William Hill yesterday reported a bet of £2,000 at 4-1 for Barton Bank, who is now 7-2 for next week's race. One Man is favourite at 13-8.

RACELINE
FULL RESULTS SERVICE
0891-168-168
0891 168 COMMENTARY
BEFORE THE OFF
RESULTS
W'HAMPTON 101 201 301
F'KESTONE 102 202 302
IRISH 120 220 320
EVENING RACING
W'HAMPTON 103 203 303
Calls charged at 39p/min cheap rate, 49p/min at all other times. Multi-way Lines. Leeds LS1 6JL

Wolverhampton all-weather Flat afternoon card

12.55 Benjamins Law
1.25 Hard Love
1.55 Seeking Destiny
2.25 It's So Easy
2.55 Star Talent
3.25 Eastleigh
3.55 El Nido
4.25 Super Benz (nb)

Going: Standard. ★ Denotes blinkers.
Figures in brackets after horse's name denote days since latest outing.

12.55 SNOWSTORM HANDICAP (DIV I) 1m 1f 79yds £3,713

101 056302 **BEAUMAN (54)** P Evans 5-10-0 — S Sanders 2
102 471121 **BENJAMINS LAW (21) (D)** J Pickering 4-10-0 — J Quinn 9
103 70449/-0 **DUVEEN (15)** J White 5-9-12 — P P Murphy (5) 1
104 6-32005 **THATCHER'S ERA (62)** T Barron 3-9-8 — J Fortune 10
105 100013 **JALMAID (21)** B McMahon 3-9-8 — G Carter 3
106 000-410 **DONSA (440) (H)** J L Harris 6-9-5 — A Mackay 7★
107 000030 **NORTH ESK (12)** C Dwyer 5-9-0 — G Dwyer 4
108 102-001 **EAST BARNS (218)** S Gollings 7-8-13 — F Norton 11★
109 320650 **COLOSSE (12)** J Eyre 3-8-8 — R Lappin 6
110 230606 **BOOST (61)** Mrs N Macauley 3-8-7 — S D Williams 5★
111 350000 **ZALAMENT (11)** N Littmoden 3-8-5 — T G McLaughlin 8
11 runners

TOP FORM TIPS: Boost 5, Benjamins Law 7, Jalmaid 6

1994: No corresponding meeting.

Betting: 8-4 Benjamins Law, 7-2 Jalmaid, 5-1 Beauman, 7-1 East Barns, 8-1 Donsa, Thatcher's Era, 12-1 North Esk, Colosse, 14-1 Boost, 20-1 Duveen

FORM GUIDE – BEAUMAN: Chased leaders, challenged and ridden over 2f out, one pace. 7l 2nd off 16 to Road Music (Southwell 1m, Std).
BENJAMINS LAW: Headway to lead over 2f out, ran on well, bt Pine Ridge Lad ¾ with JALMAID (rec 8lb) prominent, led over 3f out until over 2f out, kept on, 8l away 3rd of 13 (Wolverhampton 1m1f79yds, Std)
THATCHER'S ERA: Headway over ½ out, kept on, 5l 5th of 20 to Hatta Breeze (Leicester 1m, Gd).
NORTH ESK: Headway when no room over 2f out, not reach leaders. 10l 7th of 13 to Total Rush (Lingfield 1m2f, Std).
EAST BARNS: Effort under pressure 2f out, headway to lead inside final f, all out, bt Harry Broome ok (Nottingham 1m2f, Gd-Fm).
BOOST: Formerly trained by C Thornton; latest run on Flat, finished 9th of 20, one pace final 2f, 2½ around 5l bhd Northern Spark (Newcastle 7f, Gd-Fm).

1.25 BLACK ICE CLAIMING STAKES (DIV I) 1m 4f £2,363

201 214164 **RIVAL BID (13) (BF)** Mrs N Macauley 7-9-3 — S D Williams 1
202 41-3521 **WHAT'S THE VERDICT (210)** M Johnston 3-9-2 — T Williams 4
203 056-06 **DOUBLE JEOPARDY (11)** J White 4-8-13 — J Williams 5
204 600-000 **KINDAKOOLA (26)** M Chapman 4-8-7 — C Hawday (7) 9
205 450-000 **MEDIA MESSENGER (12)** N Littmoden 6-8-7 — T G McLaughlin 2
206 60-0600 **RAINBOW WALK (257) (D)** J O'Shea 5-8-7 — J Quinn 6★
207 23405 **HARD LOVE (11)** J Eyre 3-8-3 — R Lappin 7
208 5604/05 **FROALLS WONDER (18)** N Babbage 7-8-3 — P P Murphy (5) 3
209 0- **PATS LADS (511)** D Burchell 5-8-2 — A Mackay 5
9 runners

TOP FORM TIPS: Hard Love 5, What's The Verdict 7, Rival Bid 6

Betting: 5-2 What's The Verdict, 11-4 Rival Bid, 7-2 Hard Love, 11-2 Rainbow Walk, 8-1 Double Jeopardy, 14-1 Pats Lads, 20-1 Media Messenger, Kindakoola, Figalle Wonder

FORM GUIDE – RIVAL BID: Dwelt, not clear run final f, ran on, 4½ 4th of 13 to Wet Patch (Lingfield 1m2f, Std).
WHAT'S THE VERDICT: Made all, stayed on strongly, bt Simand 6l (Ayr, 1m2f, Gd-Fm).
DOUBLE JEOPARDY: Outpaced and never able to challenge, 14l 6th of 9 to Somerar (Lingfield 7f, Std).
KINDAKOOLA: Led 6l out, headed and ridden 4f out, soon faded, 41l 16th of 20 to Saliska (Haydock 1m6f, Gd).
RAINBOW WALK: Chased leaders, weakened 2f out, 12l 14th of 23 to Roving Minstrel (Doncaster 1m, Gd-Fm).
HARD LOVE: Held up, headway over 2f out, 8l 6th of 7 to Renown (Lingfield 1m2f, Std).

1.55 BLIZZARD NURSERY HANDICAP 2YO 7f £3,971

301 603341 **HONESTLY (18) (D)** B Smart 9-7 — S Sanders 6
302 241620 **WESTMAN'S WENCH (78)** R Hollinshead 8-13 — M Wigham 4
303 422 **BIT OF BOTHER (194)** T Barron 8-12 — J Fortune 5
304 021102 **CHILIBANG BANG (16)** J Berry 8-11 — P Roberts (7) 7
305 025 **YOUNG FREDERICK (16)** K Burke 8-9 — J Tate 1
306 000206 **THE WAD (77)** D Nicholls 8-4 — J Quinn 8
307 144440 **MAGIC MAKER (18)** B Preece 8-2 — M Adams 3★
308 00000 **SEEKING DESTINY (40)** M Chapman 7-7 — Martin Dwyer (7) 2
8 runners

TOP FORM TIPS: Young Frederick 8, Seeking Destiny 7, Honestly 6

Betting: 11-4 Honestly, 7-2 Chilibang Bang, 5-1 Westman's Weigh, 6-1 Young Frederick, 7-1 Bit Of Bother, 10-1 The Wad, Seeking Destiny, 20-1 Image Maker

FORM GUIDE – HONESTLY: Always handy, led over 2f out, ran on strongly final f when big CHILIBANG BANG (rec 3lb) 4l, always prominent, every chance entering straight, one pace inside final f (Wolverhampton 7f, Std).
WESTMAN'S WENCH: Prominent, ridden well over 1f out, soon beaten when 9th, btn 5l by Lunar Mist (Newmarket 6f, Gd-Fm).
BIT OF BOTHER: Close up, every chance well over 1f out, one pace when 2nd, btn 2½, to Padaca (Ayr 6f, Fm).
YOUNG FREDERICK: Held up, never near to challenge when 5th, btn 8l, to Ultra Barley (Lingfield 7f, Std).
THE WAD: Chased leaders, effort over 2f out, no extra final f, 7½, btn 14l, to Royal Ceilidh (Catterick 7f, Gd-Fm).
SEEKING DESTINY: Racing from 16lb out of the handicap, close up until ridden over 2f out, weakened, when 7th, btn 11l, to Rossa Gold (Southwell 1m, Std).

2.25 CEEFAX HANDICAP (DIV I) 7f £2,226

401 001661 **CERTAIN WAY (18) (D)** N Littmoden 5-9-10 — T G McLaughlin 2
402 000004 **MONIS (15)** J Balding 4-9-7 — J Edmunds (7) 1
403 600000 **ARABOYBILL (67) (D)** R Simpson 4-9-6 — S Whitworth 7★
404 630000 **YOUNG BERRON (18)** B McMahon 3-9-4 — G Carter 9
405 050004 **DREAM CARRIER (18) (D)** R Peacock 7-9-4 — P McCabe (3) 4
406 425424 **DH CALIGARI (18) (BF)** S Gollings 3-9-0 — J Quinn 3★
407 0-00450 **FLAMENCO (18) (D)** J Bethell 3-8-11 — T Williams 6
408 000-005 **SEA GOD (24)** M Chapman 4-8-10 — C Hawday (7) 5
409 000009 **IT'S SO EASY (18) (D)** A James 4-7-11 — N Adams 8
9 runners

TOP FORM TIPS: It's So Easy 8, Dream Carrier 7, Certain Way 6

Betting: 7-2 It's So Easy, 9-2 Certain Way, 11-2 Dh Caligari, Dream Carrier, 7-1 Monis, 8-1 Araboybill, Young Berron, 12-1 Sea God, 16-1 Flamenco

FORM GUIDE – CERTAIN WAY: In rear, pushed along and headway halfway, 4th straight, ridden to lead well inside final f when big Maple Bay a nk, with DREAM CARRIER (rec 18lb) 4½l back in 4th (Wolverhampton 7f, Std).
YOUNG BERRON: Chased leaders, under pressure and 6th straight, soon no chance, 10l 7th to Rakis with FLAMENCO (rec 6lb) last of 12, lost touch entering final 2f, tailed off (Wolverhampton 7f, Std).
MONIS: Prominent, one pace from well over 1f out when 4th, btn 7l, to Little Iber (Wolverhampton 6f, Std).
DH CALIGARI: Led 2f, every chance straight, one pace from 1f out, when 4th, btn 7l, to Little Scarlet (Wolverhampton 1m6f, Std).
SEA GOD: Not disgraced when hanging on 5th, btn 10l, bhd Berge (Southwell 6f, Std).
IT'S SO EASY: Best run for some time when staying-on 3rd of 13, btn just over 3l bhd Scissor Ridge (Lingfield 7f, Std).

2.55 HARD WORKING STABLE STAFF SELLING STAKES £2,259

501 620030 **AT THE SAVOY (24) (D)** T Barron 4-9-5 — J Fortune 7★
502 556000 **BOLD ARISTOCRAT (21) (D)** R Hollinshead 4-9-5 — F Lynch (7) 3
503 305000 **NEWBURY COAT (28)** B Preece 5-9-5 — Martin Dwyer (7) 12★
504 112421 **SEA DEVIL (232) (D)** M Camacho 9-9-5 — J Quinn 4
505 115650 **SENSE OF PRIORITY (141) (D)** D Nicholls 5-9-5 — Alex Greaves 13
506 504-150 **STAR TALENT (240) (D)** Gay Kelleway 4-9-5 — S Sanders 1
507 000000 **FLASHING SABRE (11)** J Berry 3-8-3 — P Roberts (7) 5★
508 020400 **LIVE PROJECT (18)** M Johnston 3-8-3 — T Williams 10
509 600445 **MONTAGUE DAWSON (28) (D)** Mrs N Macauley 3-8-3 — S D Williams 6
510 000- **MAN OF MAY (4320)** N Littmoden 3-8-12 — T G McLaughlin 2
511 504400 **MISTER RAIDER (11)** S Mellor 3-8-12 — S Whitworth 11★
512 008000 **SARASOMA (30)** J Pearce 4-8-8 — S Gollnard (7) 8★
513 300040 **NIVASHA (16)** R Hood 3-8-7 — N Adams 9
13 runners

TOP FORM TIPS: Star Talent 8, Sea Devil 7, Montague Dawson 6

Betting: 11-8 Star Talent, 7-2 Sea Devil, 8-1 Montague Dawson, 10-1 At The Savoy, Sense Of Priority, 12-1 Live Project, Flashing Sabre, 16-1 Mister Raider, Newbury Coat, Bold Aristocrat

FORM GUIDE – SEA DEVIL: Prominent, led well inside final f when btn Rupert's Princess 1¾l (Southwell 6f, Std).
SENSE OF PRIORITY: Held up, never near to challenge when 9th, btn 13l, to Ashgore (Wolverhampton 7f, Std).
STAR TALENT: Smart performer at his best when trained by D Elsworth, bt Cool Jazz in April (Warwick 7f, Gd). Sold 5,000gns Newmarket Autumn Sales.
MONTAGUE DAWSON: Mid-division, stayed on final 2f, never dangerous when 6th, btn 9l, to Mister Fire Eyes (Southwell 6f, Std).
MISTER RAIDER: Behind, soon outpaced when 8th, btn 9l, to Super Rocky (Lingfield 5f, Std).

3.25 SNOWSTORM HANDICAP (DIV II) 1m 1f 79yds £2,701

601 252033 **CALDER KING (29)** J Eyre 4-10-0 — R Lappin 2★
602 330454 **SHOLOKHOV (29)** J Berry 3-9-12 — S Finet (7) 12
603 46-0403 **WARHURST (218)** D Nicholls 4-9-9 — Alex Greaves 9
604 005000 **CHILDREN'S CHOICE (34) (D)** P McBride 4-9-8 — G Carter 5
605 605046 **EASTLEIGH (15)** R Hollinshead 6-8-5 — M Wigham 11
606 050560 **CAPTAIN BARNABLAISE (38)** D Thom 6-8-13 — F Norton 10
607 000466 **BY THE BAY (16)** C Elsey 3-8-11 — S Sanders 4
608 00-5000 **ILLUSTER (120)** G Harra 5-8-8 — S D Williams 8
609 000000 **CHARLIE-DON'T SURF (15)** R Gaest 3-8-6 — J Tate 1
610 040/10 **SCENT OF POWER (207)** N Babbage 5-8-4 — P P Murphy (5) 7
611 006-050 **WAR REQUIEM (108)** Gay Kelleway 5-7-13 — J Quinn 6
612 000000 **BRITANNIA BELLS (140)** M Chapman 4-7-10 — Martin Dwyer (7) 3
12 runners

TOP FORM TIPS: Eastleigh 8, Warhurst 7, Calder King 6

Betting: 7-2 Calder King, 4-1 Captain Barnablaise, 5-1 Eastleigh, 6-1 Warhurst, 7-1 By The Bay, 8-1 Sholokhov, 10-1 Children's Choice, 14-1 Scent Of Power

FORM GUIDE – CALDER KING: Outpaced early, headway over 2f out, kept on, 2½l 3rd of 8 to Beaumont (Wolverhampton 1m3f, Std).
SHOLOKHOV: Led until weakened over 1f out, 7l last of 4 to Aoife Alainn (Edinburgh 1m, Gd-Fm)
WARHURST: Headway over 2f out, stayed on under pressure, 3½l 3rd of 11 to Slip A Coin (Wolverhampton 1m179yds, Std).
CHILDREN'S CHOICE: Behind final 5f, lost under 2l 13th of 15 to Ayuali (Folkestone 1m4f, Gd-Fm).
EASTLEIGH: Chased leader until weakened from 3f out, 7½l 6th of 12 to Spencer's Revenge (Lingfield 1m, Sd).
WAR REQUIEM: Behind final 2f in apprentice rcp, lost under 2½l 16th of 19 to Kasdyan (Sandown 1m2f, Gd-Std).

3.55 BLACK ICE CLAIMING STAKES (DIV II) 1m 4f £2,363

1 100012 **SWEET SUPPOSIN (18)** C Dwyer 4-9-7 — C Dwyer 4★
2 4000/0- **FRONTIER FLIGHT (206)** Miss L Siddall 5-9-5 — D Penn (3) 6
3 145204 **EL NIDO (44) (D)** M Camacho 7-8-11 — J Quinn 7
4 00-362 **HEIGHTH OF FAME (47)** A J Wilson 4-8-9 — K Sked (7) 5
5 0-00000 **GENUINE LEADER (114)** P Murphy 3-8-8 — J Williams 2★
6 400005 **HILL FARM KATIE (16)** W Brisbourne 4-8-8 — A Clark 9
7 051000 **RAFTER-J (60)** J A Harris 4-8-5 — S Sanders 8
8 0-00000 **MORD LYS (32)** B Llewellyn 4-8-3 — T Williams 1
9 00-0600 **HUSH CROSS (13)** S Knight 3-7-13 — M Worley (3) 3
9 runners

TOP FORM TIPS: Sweet Supposin 5, El Nido 7, Frontier Flight 6

Betting: 2-1 Sweet Supposin, 11-4 Frontier Flight, 5-1 El Nido, Heighth Of Fame, 10-1 Genuine Leader, 12-1 Hill Farm Katie, Rafter-J, 33-1 Mord Lys, Hush Cross

FORM GUIDE – SWEET SUPPOSIN: Ridden and ran on over 1f out, never nearer, 2½l 2nd of 12 to Mr Nevermind (Lingfield 1m, Std).
FRONTIER FLIGHT: Led until faded over 1f out, 8½l 4th of 15 to Sarah-Clare (Folkestone 1m11f149yds, Hvy) Successful over hurdles in September and November.
EL NIDO: Better for run, led 1st, 2nd and outpaced over 1f out, 16l 4th of 13 to La Brief (Southwell 1m6f, Std).
HEIGHTH OF FAME: Chased leader, 3rd straight, kept on, 10l 2nd of 12 to Opera Buff (Wolverhampton 1m4f, Std).
GENUINE LEADER: Ex-Irish, ridden halfway, soon no danger, over 17l 10th of 12 to Kippanour (Clonmel 1m2f, Gd-Fm).

4.25 CEEFAX HANDICAP (DIV 2) 7f £2,226

1 202146 **JIGSAW BOY (18)** P Murphy 5-10-0 — J Williams 7
2 01-0000 **MOODY (93)** Gay Kelleway 3-9-10 — S Finet (7) 7
3 003304 **SUPER BENZ (13) (D)** J Eyre 5-9-8 — R Lappin 2
4 000002 **QUINZE MARTIN (15) (D)** D Haydn Jones 7-9-0 — A Mackay 5★
5 2U0444 **NORTHERN GREY (11)** J Berry 5-8-13 — P Fessey (5) 6
6 000463 **SUPERSET (26)** B McMahon 3-8-11 — S Sanders 4
7 040000 **JOE'S CHOICE (18) (D)** B Preece 7-8-8 — N Adams 8
8 0-03000 **RAINBOWS RHAPSODY (105)** M Camacho 4-8-4 — J Quinn 3
8 runners

TOP FORM TIPS: Super Benz 6, Colonel Martin 7, Superset 6

Betting: 5-2 Super Benz, 11-4 Colonel Martin, 9-2 Superset, 5-1 Northern Grey, 7-1 Jigsaw Boy, 12-1 Joe's Choice, Moody, 16-1 Rainbows Rhapsody.

FORM GUIDE – JIGSAW BOY: Ridden and 4th straight, no extra approaching final f when 6th of 12, btn around 7l, to Rakis (Wolverhampton 7f, Std).
MOODY: Never able to challenge, 9l 12th of 16 to Squire Corrie (Newmarket 6f, Gd).
SUPER BENZ: Good 4th in competitive handicap on latest start, slightly hampered 4f out, kept on, btn 3½l bhd Duke Valentino (Lingfield 7f, Std).
QUINZE MARTIN: Held up, headway halfway, ran on from over 1f out, just failed when 2nd, btn a nk hd by Four Of Spades (Lingfield 7f, Std).
NORTHERN GREY: Led, headed 2f out, weakened final f when 4th, btn 11l, to Samwar (Lingfield 7f, Std).
SUPERSET: Driven along halfway, kept on final f when 3rd, btn 2½l, to Bajan Frontier (Wolverhampton 6f, Std).
JOE'S CHOICE: Weakened over 1f out, 7½l 10th to Certain Way (Wolverhampton 7f, Std).

● Blinkered today for the first time: WOLVERHAMPTON (afternoon): 12.55 Boost; 1.25 Rainbow Walk; 2.55 Flashing Sabre. WOLVERHAMPTON (evening): 7.30 Chadleigh Lane; 9.00 Supreme Power; 9.30 Backview, Elly Fleetfoot.

Wolverhampton tonight

7.00 Kira
7.30 Spencer's Revenge
8.00 Ballos
8.30 TOUJOURS RIVIERA (nap)
9.00 Marino Street
9.30 Opera Buff

Going: Standard. ★ Denotes blinkers.
Figures in brackets after horse's name denote days since latest outing.

7.00 'FAREWELL 1995' HANDICAP 0f £2,736

1 010001 **LITTLE RHIB (18) (CD)** P Evans 4-10-0 — S Sanders 4
2 115002 **CRETAN GIFT (18) (CD)** N Littmoden 4-9-8 — T G McLaughlin 5★
3 163300 **MORDAN RAIDER (49) (D)** M Camacho 7-9-5 — D Parish (5) 6
4 100000 **CRYSTAL LOOP (18) (CD)** A Berry 3-9-0 — P Roberts (7) 7
5 532033 **SING WITH THE BAND (18)** B McMahon 4-9-2 — G Carter 2
6 513000 **DELROS (21) (C)** D Haydn Jones 4-7-12 — A Mackay 3
7 323602 **KIRA (30)** J Eyre 5-7-8 — P Fessey (5) 1
7 runners

TOP FORM TIPS: Sing With The Band 5, Cretan Gift 7

1994: Four Of Spades 3 8 13 A Clark 3-4 (W S Cunningham) 6 ran

Betting: 11-4 Little Rhir, 3-1 Cretan Gift, 9-2 Sing With The Band, 5-1 Mordan Raider, Kira, 12-1 Crystal Loop, 14-1 Delrob

7.30 NEW YEAR CLAIMING STAKES 1m 100yds £3,065

1 111632 **SECOND COLOURS (15) (CD)** Mrs M Reveley 3-9-3 — K Darley 3
2 564054 **RAMBO WALTZER (40)** D Nicholls 3-9-2 — Alex Greaves 4
3 011121 **SPENCER'S REVENGE (15) (C) (D)** M Ryan 6-9-1 — G Bardwell 8
4 0100-05 **DRAGON GREEN (50)** J White 4-8-9 — Dale Gibson 6
5 000 **SCROO (59)** R Peacock 5-8-9 — P McCabe (3) 11
6 060000 **CHADLEIGH LANE (32) (C)** R Hollinshead 3-8-8 — M Wigham 2★
7 233042 **MAPLE BAY (18) (C)** A Bailey 5-8-7 — 9
8 5216 **DANNISTAR (21) (C)** P Evans 3-8-5 — S Sanders 12
9 050405 **ANOTHEROME TO NOTE (11)** N Littmoden 4-8-3 — T G McLaughlin 7★
10 0-60000 **REX HILL (15) (C)** D Haydn Jones 3-8-1 — A Mackay 5
11 0102-00 **DANCE ON SOPHENCE (178) (D)** J Peacock 7-8-1 — J Quinn 1
12 0-40500 **FAEZ (68)** R Simpson 5-8-1 — F Norton 13
13 150000 **OFF THE AIR (61) (CD)** B Llewellyn 4-7-12 — T Williams 10★
13 runners

TOP FORM TIPS: Spencer's Revenge 8, Second Colours 7, Dragon Green 6

1994: Northern Caledon 3 9 2 S Davies 8-1 (R Heaton-Ellis) 12 ran

Betting: 2-1 Spencer's Revenge, 9-4 Second Colours, 6-1 Dannistar, 8-1 Maple Bay, 10-1 Rambo Waltzer, Dragon Green, 16-1 Chadleigh Lane, 20-1 Dance On Sopence, Off The Air

8.00 RESOLUTIONS MAIDEN STAKES 2YO 1m 1f 79yds £2,782

1 02 **BALIOS (28)** M Johnston 8-0 — T Williams 6
2 623120 **BATH KNIGHT (16)** D Brenan Sons 9-0 — G Carter 7
3 000005 **DANCING CAVALIER (21)** R Hollinshead 9-0 — F Lynch (7) 10
4 5000 **MONTECRISTO (54)** R Gaest 9-0 — J Tate 3
5 5 **SKIPMAN (21)** N Smith 9-0 — S D Williams 8
6 0 **THISNORTHERNLADYBOY (65)** B Preece 9-0 — M Adams 4
7 0 **BALMORAL PRINCESS (49)** J Peacock 8-9 — Dale Gibson 2
8 500008 **BE MY BIRD (77)** B Meehan 8-9 — G Bardwell 9
9 055 **HAVANA HEIGHTS (32)** J Eyre 8-9 — R Lappin 5
10 46 **REPLOY (52)** Lord Huntingdon 8-9 — Dean McKeown 1
10 runners

TOP FORM TIPS: Ballos 5, Montecristo 7, Replay 6

1994: Sky Paddy 2 9 0 A Clark 11-4 (K Cunningham-Brown) 5 ran

Betting: 2-1 Ballos, 7-2 Replay, 5-1 Be My Bird, Montecristo, 8-1 Bath Knight, Havana Heights, 14-1 Skipman, 16-1 Dancing Cavalier

8.30 HOGMANAY HANDICAP 1m 1f 79yds £2,845

1 142501- **MAKE A NOTE (468)** P Evans 4-10-0 — S Sanders 7
2 464003 **TOUJOURS RIVIERA (16)** J Pearce 5-9-13 — G Bardwell 2
3 000345 **KOMREYEV DANCER (92) (C)** A Bailey 5-9-7 — P Roberts (7) 1
4 2311 **CASHMERE LADY (28) (C)** J Eyre 5-8-11 — R Lappin 6
5 150 **WHACKFORD SQUIRREL (1892)** D Nicholls 3-8-9 — Alex Greaves 3
6 200004 **QUEENS STROLLER (33) (CD) (BF)** T Wall 4-8-9 — J Quinn 4
7 620000 **ARABOYBILL (67) (D)** R Simpson 4-7-11 — A Mackay 5★
7 runners

TOP FORM TIPS: Cashmere Lady 5, Toujours Riviera 7

1994: Beatloo 5 9 9 S Sanders Evens (Miss M Macauley) 7 ran

Betting: 7-4 Cashmere Lady, 3-2 Toujours Riviera, 11-2 Komreyev Dancer, 7-1 Make A Note, 8-1 Whackford Squirrel, 12-1 Araboybill, Queens Stroller

9.00 B & K BUILDING SERVICES SELLING STAKES 2YO 7f £2,085

1 400656 **SUPREME POWER (16)** W Muir 8-2 — J Tate 5★
2 010055 **FLOOD'S FANCY (18)** A Bailey 8-11 — P Roberts (7) 2
3 644 **LOCH STYLE (18) (BF)** R Hollinshead 8-11 — F Lynch (7) 6
4 0360 **MITEDWL RAIDER (28)** J A Harris 8-11 — C Teague (5) 5
5 66 **YEOMAN OLIVER (16)** B McMahon 8-11 — M Wigham 2★
6 0000 **CUPLA FOCAIL (117)** W Muir 8-6 — J-P Lopez 9
7 543525 **MARINO STREET (11)** P Evans 8-6 — S Sanders 7
8 0020 **QUINTESSA (16)** B Palling 8-6 — S D Williams 4
9 0 **RADMORE BRANDY (51)** N Littmoden 8-6 — T G McLaughlin 1
9 runners

TOP FORM TIPS: Marino

Soccer

Shearer poised for the Premier ton

Paul Weaver asks former England strikers to evaluate Blackburn's man of 99 goals

IT IS at this time of year, with needles beginning to fall off Christmas trees, that Alan Shearer may feel especially vulnerable.

Shearer is Britain's outstanding centre-forward — the best in Europe, according to Dennis Bergkamp — but he has scored only five times for England in 21 appearances.

His last competitive international goal was against Turkey in November 1992 and, although he scored in friendlies against Greece in May, 1994, and the United States four months later, he has since made 10 full appearances without hitting the target. It is little wonder the England coach Terry Venables, rather like Ronald Colman in Random Harvest, wears the bewildered expression of a man who has found the key but lost the front door.

Shearer has played at the apex of the Christmas tree formation employed by Venables — the chief fairy, according to some unkindly observers — but, with his back to goal, has often looked a forlorn, frustrated figure.

His club form, however, cannot be faulted. He faces Tottenham Hotspur at Ewood Park this afternoon looking for his 100th Premiership goal for Blackburn Rovers in only 124 league appearances. He is likely to find it; he has scored in every home game this season.

If and when he manages to score he will become the first man to reach the Premiership century; he leads Les Ferdinand (78), Andy Cole (69), Ian Wright (65) and Matt Le Tissier by some distance.

So how good is he? Tommy Lawton, he of the sleek centre-parting, is in no doubt. "Dixie Dean was the best of all of us — just look at his record. But without question Alan is the best of his day and an all-time great."

Lawton, 76, who lost six peak years to the Second World War but still managed 231 league goals in 390 appearances and 22 in 23 internationals, adds: "Alan is the complete centre-forward. He's determined and unselfish, he leads the line, is strong in the air and with either foot, has pace, a good positional sense and he scores goals. I honestly can't see a weakness and would place him ahead of Gary Lineker, who did a wonderful job for England.

"But Terry Venables has got it wrong. You can't expect a lad to go 90 minutes on his own. I needed help from players like Raich Carter and Tom Finney; Alan should tell Venables he needs support. I would look to Ferdinand and, from midfield, to Paul Ince but not Paul Gascoigne, who has made more money crying than from good football. If we rely on him to win things, God help us. But Alan is just the sort you can rely on."

Finney, 73, who is about to have a stand named after him at Preston North End's Deepdale ground, was perhaps England's finest all-round forward and earned 76 caps. He says: "Alan's the best we've got, no doubt. He's good in the air, brave and has good control and pace. I rate him very highly, the best we've had for years and a good team-man.

"But he thrives on service. You can't do it on your own against international defences playing a sweeper. What we need are pacy wingers and I think Venables has been unlucky that Darren Anderton has been injured."

A Teessider with a genuine knowledge of football's finer points would appear to be a scarce commodity if the way fans of Middlesbrough jeered Shearer recently is anything to go by; they then reported the centre-forward to the FA for celebrating his goal by winking in their direction. Wilf Mannion, however, the 26-times capped inside-forward of the Forties and early Fifties, is an exception.

Now 77 and looking forward to Boro's game against Aston Villa on Monday, he says: "Venables should have given more caps to the poor Geordie lads Peter Beardsley and Chris Waddle. They would have given Alan the proper service. But we must stick with Shearer."

Allan Clarke, who won 19 England caps in the Seventies, says: "Shearer is our best forward by a mile. Mick Jones was the best I played with but Alan gets more goals. But two up front is very hard, let alone one. I think Robbie Fowler would give the right support. Apart from scoring goals he's a proper footballer."

Roger Hunt, 34 caps in the Sixties and a World Cup winner, says: "Teddy Sheringham might be the man but 4-4-2 is so difficult. When I played for Liverpool I had [Ian] Callaghan and [Peter] Thompson on the wings."

Lineker, moreover, thinks Shearer's one deficiency is his lack of experience in Continental football but he is convinced he will make it. Brian Clough, two caps only, compares Shearer with himself but admits that the younger man makes more goals. "Mind, I tried to make them once but the people I played with couldn't score."

Score and roar . . . Shearer celebrates another useful day at the office MARK PAIN

Sports Honours

Edwards is thrilled, Reeve flattered

Don Beet

THE world-record triple-jumper Jonathan Edwards is as thrilled with his MBE, awarded in the New Year Honours List, as he was with his other achievements over a remarkable year.

The modest man from Gateshead — and son of a Devon vicar — who was recently named BBC Television's Sports Personality Of The Year after his exploits at this year's world championships, said of his award: "It's a great honour. Outside of actual athletics this achievement, along with winning the BBC award, has been one of my dreams. Now it has come true and I have got both of them."

Dermot Reeve is never lost for words and after being awarded an OBE the talented cricket captain and mimic said: "I'm flattered but Warwickshire's successes over the past couple of years are not just down to me."

More honour came Warwickshire's way when their former player Alan Smith, chief executive of the Test and County Cricket Board, was given a CBE for his services as an administrator.

Shaun Edwards, the Wigan, England and Great Britain captain awarded the OBE, said: "I don't know how deserving I am of it but obviously I'm very pleased."

The former Lions teammates Dean Richards and Robert Jones are made MBEs for their services to rugby union and Jones said: "I am as delighted with this as any achievement on the pitch."

Another Welshman similarly honoured, the Liverpool striker Ian Rush, said: "I remember Kenny Dalglish getting his and thinking it was great even to know someone who had received one."

Karen Dixon, a member of Britain's three-day event team, thought she might have to wait until after the Olympic Games in Atlanta, where she will compete on the veteran Get Smart, for "anything like an MBE". The 31-year-old from County Durham said: "I'm thrilled but a little surprised."

Nine years after his MBE the 43-year-old motorcycle champion Joey Dunlop receives an OBE for breaking Mike Hailwood's record for Isle of Man TT wins. Another OBE goes to Kendra Slawinski, England's former netball captain.

Ted Lowe, the quiet voice of snooker, broke out of whispers to say of his MBE: "I am delighted."

Complete list, pages 6 and 7

Sailing

Sayonara drifts to frustrating win

Bob Fisher

SAYONARA was first home in the Sydney-Hobart Race yesterday, the first American yacht to take the line honours in 17 years, but progress throughout the third day was slow and put paid to her chance of breaking the course record.

The 78ft yacht, owned by Larry Ellison and skippered by Geoff Stagg, took three days 53 minutes and 35 seconds to complete the 630-mile course, nicknamed "Hell on High Water", more than 10 hours outside the record.

"We thought we had a great shot at the record," said Ellison, "but the wind gods said 'no'. It hadn't been as frustratingly light as the final day all the way."

"We had a very hard night across Bass Strait, with 40-45 knots of wind crashing off very, very big seas," said Stagg, "but the contrast was marked." The big sloop was almost drifting as it passed the Iron Pot and entered the Derwent River but a sea breeze began to fill in, a light spinnaker was hoisted and Sayonara, who led from the Boxing Day start, finished two hours before George Snow's Brindabella.

"This morning you could have swum faster," said the media mogul Rupert Murdoch who helped steer, worked the winches and made soup for the crew on Sayonara.

Snow has taken second place twice in a row but did have the consolation of leading Peter Walker's 69ft Foxtel Amazon, a specialist downwind design, by just over two hours. Fourth home was Anton Starling's 82ft Fudge, formerly Bill Koch's Matador2, followed by Syd Fischer's 50ft Ragamuffin, the best placed on corrected time of the early finishers.

Kendall's triple transfer coup

Ian Ross

HOWARD KENDALL's regeneration of Sheffield United continued apace yesterday with the signing of three more players.

After a day of frantic activity Kendall had convinced the former England internationals Gordon Cowans and David White, along with Notts County's defender Chris Short, that they should move to Bramall Lane and join United's desperate fight for First Division survival.

Cowans, who recently celebrated his 37th birthday, was signed on a free transfer from Wolves with White making permanent his loan move from Leeds after the two clubs had agreed a £500,000 fee.

Short, the brother of Everton's Craig, moves from one of Kendall's former clubs in a £130,000 exchange deal which sees Paul Rogers leave for Meadow Lane.

Kendall has now bought five players in 16 days and he said: "The signings I have made since my arrival show that we are bringing in quality footballers.

"I saw Gordon Cowans play against our reserve side recently and realised that, despite his age, he has still got what it takes. I want him to do the job here that Peter Reid did for me at both Everton and Manchester City."

White's surprising departure from Elland Road represents a loss of £1.5 million for Leeds, who signed him from Manchester City almost exactly two years ago in a £2 million exchange deal involving David Rocastle.

Jan Molby has joined Norwich on a month's loan and goes straight into the midfield against Reading in a game likely to go ahead because of Carrow Road's undersoil heating.

Norwich's new manager Gary Megson moved quickly after Liverpool said the 32-year-old Dane could leave Anfield and Megson wants to secure him later on a free transfer.

The Soccer Diary will return next week.

Linesman sees red after losing his job

A LINESMAN who was demoted by the Scottish Football Association is taking legal advice.

George McGuire has been taken off the senior list following an incident on October 21 at Ibrox involving Alan Lawrence of Hearts and the Rangers defender Craig Moore.

McGuire, of Bonnyrigg, and the Aberdeen referee Mike Pocock missed an alleged elbow by Lawrence, who later received a one-match SFA suspension on the strength of a referee supervisor's report.

Earlier this month the 41-year-old civil servant was told he can now officiate only in amateur football after 14 years as a referee in Scotland.

"I am taking legal advice on the matter," said McGuire, who claims he was told there was no right of appeal against the decision.

It is believed McGuire is angry that his explanation that he did not see the incident involving Lawrence and Moore was not accepted by the SFA.

Rangers seek revenge on ice

Patrick Glenn

LIKE Torvill and Dean, Rangers and Hibernian will have the ice to themselves this afternoon as the Premier Division programme capitulates to the weather.

More correctly the league leaders and their third-placed rivals will have the heated surface of Ibrox on which to perform. Rangers' 1–0 defeat at the hands of the Edinburgh side in September is their only reverse so far in the championship and revenge would extend the champions' lead over Celtic to eight points before the Old Firm collision next Wednesday.

"I know people claim it is an advantage to be playing while Celtic aren't and that we have the chance to put pressure on them but there is equal pressure on us to get the result," said the Rangers manager Walter Smith.

With Alex Cleland available, Smith may revert to his preferred three-man central defence of Gough, Petric and McLaren, with Cleland and Robertson wide.

Alex Miller, the Hibs manager, is without the influential Michael O'Neill, Gareth Evans and Darren Dods because of injury and suspension.

TEAM SHEET

Arsenal v Wimbledon

Arsenal's Bergkamp returns after five games out with a calf injury; Helder and Hartson are dropped. The forward Clarke is expected to keep his place after an impressive debut in the 3–0 win over QPR. Wimbledon have yet to reveal if Jones will be dropped after being sent off at Chelsea. The goalkeeper Heald is fit after missing out at the Bridge with a knee-ligament injury but Segers should continue.

Blackburn v Tottenham

Blackburn's Shearer will be looking for his 100th Premiership goal. However, the centre-back Hendry and midfielder Sherwood are both suspended; Sutton and Warhurst may be recalled. Tottenham are without Fox, Howells, Dozzell and Wilson as well as their long-term casualties Anderton, Kerslake, Thorstvedt and Scott. Sheringham faces a late test on a troublesome back. Garry Francis adds the Romanian Dumitrescu and the midfielder Watson to his squad.

Bolton v Coventry

Bolton have Bergsson starting a three-match ban and may gamble on an earlier-than-expected return for Stubbs or move Phillips to centre-back and recall the full-back McAnespie. Coventry's Irish Under-21 midfielder Boland is set to play only his second game of the season, replacing the suspended Richardson.

Chelsea v Liverpool

Chelsea's Hughes is suspended so Furlong is expected to lead the attack. Myers faces a late fitness test, as Barnett and Dow are included in the squad. Liverpool's Fowler, scorer of five goals in two games, has shaken off the flu and takes his place in an unchanged side.

Everton v Leeds

Everton are unchanged after their 4–0 thrashing of Middlesbrough on Boxing Day. Ferguson has recovered from gastric flu and is expected to be on the bench. Leeds have lost Yeboah who has linked up with the Ghanaian national side. He is expected to be replaced by Wallace while Ford may continue in the absence of the suspended Palmer.

Man Utd v QPR

The French centre-back Prunier replaces May, who has joined Pallister, Bruce and Parker on United's injured list. Alex Ferguson is hoping to take the Bordeaux player on loan for the rest of the season. QPR's centre-back McDonald starts a two-match ban, so Ready is recalled. Allen is challenging Gallen for a place alongside Hateley in the attack as Ray Wilkins's team struggle to pull away the danger zone.

Nottm F v Middlesbrough

Forest's Bryan Roy, who made a brief appearance as substitute in the 1–0 win over Sheffield Wednesday, is in contention for a recall after seven weeks out with a torn cartilage. Lee is the man most under threat. Boro have Barmby and Hignett injured but Juninho is included in the squad despite picking up a knock in the Boxing Day defeat by Everton.

Performance of the week: Roy Keane (Manchester United), whose mastery of the midfield lay at the heart of Wednesday's win against Newcastle.

A N Other

ONE of the game's natural leaders, this gritty north-easterner began his career wearily but soon started to look posh. His best years were spent in the company of speckled song birds, for whom he shed blood memorably in a Cup semi-final. Later he retraced his steps on a road out of London.

Last week: Steve Wicks (Chelsea, Derby County, QPR, Crystal Palace, QPR, Chelsea).

Weekend fixtures

(3.0 unless stated)
(a-i = all-ticket; P = Postponed)

Soccer

FA CARLING PREMIERSHIP
Arsenal v Wimbledon
Aston Villa v Sheff Wed (P)
Blackburn v Tottenham
Bolton v Coventry
Chelsea v Liverpool
Everton v Leeds
Man Utd v QPR
Nottm Forest v Middlesbrough
Southampton v Man City (P)
West Ham v Newcastle (P)

FA VASE: *Third-Round second replays* Furness v Raunds Town (Winners home to Taunton Tn).
GM VAUXHALL CONFERENCE: Dag & Red v Bromsgrove. *Postponed:* Bath v Macclesfield; Farnborough v Altrincham; Gateshead v Southport; Kettering v Northwich; Kidderminster v Halifax; Runcorn v Morecambe; Slough v Stalybridge; Stevenage v Dover; Telford v Woking; Welling v Hednesford.
UNIBOND LEAGUE: *Premier Division:* Chorley v Matlock. *Postponed:* Bamber Bridge v Witton Alb; Barrow v Bishop Auckland; Blyth Spartans v Hyde Utd; Buxton v Accrington Stanley; Colwyn Bay v Droylsden; Frickley v Guiseley; Gainsborough v Emley; Knowsley v Marine; Leek Town v Boston Utd; Winsford v Eastwood Tn. *First Division:* Alfreton Tn v Bradford PA; Ashton Utd v Great Harwood Tn; Congleton Tn v Harrogate Tn; Farsley Celtic v Lincoln Utd; Fleetwood v Gretna; Leigh v Atherton LR; Netherfield v Whitley Bay; Radcliffe Bor v Curzon Ashton; Warrington Tn v Lancaster C; Worksop Tn v Eastwood Tn.
GREAT BULLS LEAGUE: *Premier Division:* Aylesbury Tn v Mangotsfield Utd; Bideford Tn v Frome Tn; Bridport v Chippenham Tn; Bristol MF v Old Down Ath; Cheddar Utd v Torrington; Taunton Tn v Brislington.
ENDSLEIGH LEAGUE
First Division
Barnsley v West Brom
Charlton v Southend
Crystal Palace v Grimsby (P)
Huddersfield v Stoke (a-i)
Leicester v Oldham (P)
Norwich v Reading
Port Vale v Luton (P)
Sheff Utd v Millwall
Sunderland v Birmingham
Tranmere v Ipswich (P)
Watford v Derby (P)
Wolverhampton v Portsmouth
Second Division
Blackpool v Swansea (P)
Brentford v Wycombe (P)
Bristol City v Bristol Rvrs
Chesterfield v Walsall (P)
Crewe v Peterborough (P)
Hull v Brighton (P)
Oxford Utd v Notts County (P)
Rotherham v Bradford (P)
Shrewsbury v Carlisle
Stockport v Wrexham (P)
Swindon v Burnsley (P)
York v Bournemouth (P)
Third Division
Barnet v Torquay (P)
Cambridge Utd v Fulham (P)
Cardiff v Wigan (P)
Colchester v Scarborough (P)
Darlington v Preston (P)
Exeter v Chester
Gillingham v Mansfield
Hartlepool v Hereford (P)
Lincoln v Leyton Orient
Northampton v Plymouth (P)
Rochdale v Bury (P)
Scunthorpe v Doncaster (P)
ICIS LEAGUE: *Premier Division:* Aylesbury v St Albans; Boreham Wood v Chertsey T; Bromley v Walton & Hersham; Carshalton v Dulwich; Grays v Enfield; Harrow Boro v Hendon; Hitchin v Hayes; Kingstonian v *Bishop's Stortford*; Molesey v Sutton Utd; Yeading v Worthing; Yeovil v Purfleet. *First:* Barking v Chesham Utd; Basingstoke T v Billericay T; Heybridge Swifts v Barton Rvrs; Maidenhead Utd v Thame Utd; Marlow v Aldershot T; Oxford C v Staines T; Tooting & Mitcham Utd v Whyteleafe; Uxbridge v Ruislip Manor; Wembley v Bognor Regis T; Wokingham T v Leyton Pennant. *Second:* Bedford T v Witham T; Bracknell T v Leatherhead; Chalfont St Peter v Ware; Cheshunt v Hungerford T; Collier Row v Hemel Hempstead; Dorking v Edgware T; Hampton v Banstead Ath; Saffron Walden T v Met Police; Wivenhoe T v Canvey Island. *Third:* Aveley v Leighton T; Cove v Southall; East Thurrock Utd v Hornchurch; Epsom & Ewell v Windsor & Eton; Flackwell Hth v Northwood; Hertford T v Lewes; Horsham v Kingsbury T; Tring T v Clapton; Wealdstone v Camberley T; Wingate & Finchley v Harlow T
LEAGUE OF IRELAND: *Premier Division:* Cork C v Sligo Rvrs (7.0). Galway Utd v Drogheda Utd (7.0). *Tomorrow:* Bohemians v Athlone Tn (3.15); UCD v St Patricks Ath (3.15)
BELL'S SCOTTISH LEAGUE
Premier Division
Falkirk v Motherwell (P)
Hearts v Celtic (P)
Kilmarnock v Aberdeen (P)
Raith v Partick (P)
Rangers v Hibernian
SCOTTISH LEAGUE
First Division
Dumbarton v Dundee (P)
Dundee Utd v Airdrie
Greenock Morton v Dunfermline (P)
Hamilton v St Mirren (P)
St Johnstone v Clydebank (P)
Second Division
Berwick v Ayr (P)
Clyde v Queen of South (P)
East Fife v Stirling (P)
Montrose v Stranraer (P)
Stenhousemuir v Forfar (P)
Third Division
Alloa v Cowdenbeath (P)
Arbroath v Albion (P)
Livingston v Caledonian T (P)
Queen's Park v Ross County (2.0)
BEAZER HOMES LEAGUE: *Premier Division:* Atherstone v Merthyr; Baldock Tn v Worcester; Chelmsford v Salisbury; Cheltenham v Stafford; Crawley Tn v Cambridge C; Dorchester v Gravesend & N; *Gresley Rvrs v Gloucester*; Halesowen v Rushden & D'monds; Weston Tn v Burton; Newport AFC v Hastings; Sudbury Tn v VS Rugby. *Midland Division:* Bedworth Utd v Bridgnorth Tn; Bury Tn v Dudley Tn; Corby Tn v Sutton Coldfield; Evesham Utd v Kings Lynn; Hinckley Tn v Solihull Bor; Moor Grn v Grantham Tn; Paget Rngrs v Leicester Utd; RC Warwick v Redditch Utd; Rothwell Tn v Nuneaton Bor; Stourbridge v Bilston Tn; Tamworth v Buckingham Tn. *Southern Division:* Ashford Tn v Weymouth; Braintree Tn v Bashley; Cinderford Tn v Fareham Tn; Fisher 93 v Sittingbourne; Fleet Tn v Erith & Belvedere; Havant Tn v Clevedon Tn; Margate v Witney Tn; Newport IOW v Trowbridge Tn; Poole Tn v Forest Grn Rvrs; Weston-S-Mare v Waterlooville; Yate Tn v Tonbridge Angels.
N-W COUNTIES LEAGUE: *First Division:* Blackpool Rvrs v Penrith; Bootle v Chadderton; Burscough v Clitheroe; Holker Old Boys v St Helens Tn; Kidsgrove Ath v Moseley; Maine Rd v Glossop NE; Nantwich Tn v Ffrinton; Newcastle Tn v Eastwood Hanley; Skelmersdale Utd v Darwen, Trafford v Salford C.
FEDERATION BREWERY NORTHERN LEAGUE: *First Division:* Billingham Syn v Chester Le Street; Durham C v W Auckland; Eppleton CW v Stockton; Ferryhill Ath v Peterlee; Murton v Shildon; RTM Newcastle v Dunston Fed; Seaham RS v Guisborough Tn; Tow Law Tn v Bedlington Ter; Whickham v Crook Tn; Whitby Tn v Consett.
IRISH LEAGUE COCA-COLA FLOODLIT CUP: *First-round, first leg:* Ballyclare v Portadown; Ballymena v Crusaders; Carrick v Glenavon, Coleraine v Bangor; Distillery v Linfield; Larne v Ards; Newry v Glentoran Omagh Tn v Cliftonville.
Rugby League
REGAL TROPHY: *Semi-finals:* St Helens v Warrington (Postponed till January 4).
NATIONAL CONFERENCE LEAGUE: *Premier Division:* Dudley Hill v Mayfield (2.0); Haworth v Leigh Miners Wid (2.0); Lock Lane v Hemel Hempstead (2.0); West Hull v Wigan St Patricks (2.0); Woolston v Milhom (2.0). *First Division:* Leigh East v Thornhill (2.0); Moldgreen v Eastmoor (2.0); Oldham St Annes v Walney Central (2.0); Oulton v Beverley (2.0).
AC LEAGUE: *First Division:* Bradford v Leeds; Wakefield T v Hull, Warrington v St Helens; Wigan v Castleford. *Second Division:* Featherstone R v Hull KR; Halifax v Keighley C, Salford v Sheffield E, Widnes v Oldham. *Third Division:* Carlisle v Huddersfield; Gateshead v York, Swinton v Batley; Workington T v Hunslet.
Tomorrow
STONES CENTENARY CHAMPIONSHIP: *First Division:* Wakefield v Batley (2.30), Whitehaven v Widnes. *Second Division:* Barrow v Chorley (2.30); Bramley v Hull KR (1.0); Doncaster v Hunslet (11.30); Leigh v Carlisle; York v Swinton (1.0).
Rugby Union
SWALEC CUP: *Fourth round:* Talywain v Dunvant (2.30).
FIVE NATIONS HEINEKEN CUP: *Semi-finals:* Leinster v Cardiff (1.30, Lansdowne Rd; Toulouse v Swansea (2.0, Los Sept-Deniers).
COURAGE CLUBS CHAMPIONSHIP: *National League One:* *Postponed:* Gloucester v Bath; Orrell v Saracens; Wasps v Harlequins; Leicester v Sale; W Hartlepool v Bristol. *National League Two:* Lon Irish v Lon Scottish; Waterloo v Bedford (2.15). *Postponed:* Moseley v Northampton; Nottingham v Newcastle Gosforth; Wakefield v Blackheath.
HEINEKEN NATIONAL LEAGUE: *First Division:* Aberavon v Neath (2.30); Llanelli v Ebbw Vale (2.30); Pontypridd v Newbridge (2.30); Treorchy v Abertillery (2.30). *Postponed:* Bridgend v Newport. *Second Division:* Aberycynon v Llanharan (2.30); Bonymaen v Caerphilly (2.30), Cross Keys v Maesteg (2.30); Pontypool v S Wales Police (2.30), Ystradgynlais v Tenby Utd (2.30). *Postponed:* Dunvant v Llandovery (due to cup tie)
SRU TENNENTS CHAMPIONSHIP: *Regional League: East One:* Boroughmuir v Watsonians (2.0); Currie v Bugsar (2.0); Haddington v Preston Lodge (2.0); Musselburgh v Edinburgh Wndrs (2.00). *East Two:* Dundee HSFP v Corstorphine (2.0); Edinburgh Acads v Gordonians (2.0); Grangemouth v Kirkcaldy (2.00); Heriots FP v Stewarts Mel FP (2.0). *South:* Hawick v Langholm (2.0); Kelso v Gala (2.0); Melrose v Jed-Forest (2.0); Peebles v Selkirk (2.0). *West:* Kilmarnock v GHK (2.0); Stirling County v Glasgow Acads (2.0); West of Scotland v Glasgow Southern (2.0); Wigtownshire v Ayr (2.0).
CLUB MATCHES: Askeans v Sutton & Epsom (2.30); Berry Hill v Worcester (2.30); Brighton Pk v Morley (2.30); Camberley v Harvard (2.15), Clifton v Weston-S-Mare; Fylde v Wharfedale (2.30), Harrogate v Bradford & Bingley (2.15); Henley v Reading (2.30); High Wycombe v Ruislip (2.30); Kendal v Keighley (2.15); Leeds v Middlesbrough (2.15); Liverpool St Helens v Winnington Pk (2.30); Lon Welsh v Richmond (2.15); Lydney v Nuneaton; Otley v Sandal (2.15); Redruth v St Ives (2.30); Roselyn Pk v Exeter (2.30), Rotherham v Huddersfield (2.30); Rugby v Birmingham Solihull; Walsall v Stourbridge (2.30), Waterloo v Bedford (2.15)
Tomorrow
TENNENTS INTER DISTRICT CHAMPIONSHIP: Glasgow District v Edinburgh District (2.0 Murrayfield)
Basketball
BUDWEISER LEAGUE: Derby v Worthing (8.0), John Carr Panthers Doncaster v Sheffield (7.0); Hemel v Newcastle (7.30).
Ice Hockey
BRITISH ASSOCIATION: *Premier Div:* Fife v Humberside (7.15); Milton Keynes v Durham (6.30); Nottingham v Slough (6.30); Sheffield v Basingstoke (7.0). *Tomorrow:* Humberside v Milton Keynes (3.0); Slough v Basingstoke (6.30). *Div One:* Billingham v Chelmsford (6.30), Dumfries v Blackburn (7.30), Manchester v Murrayfield (7.0); Paisley v Solihull (7.0); Telford v Peterborough (7.30). *Tomorrow:* Blackburn v Billingham (3.0), Bracknell v Swindon (5.15); Guildford v Telford (5.15), Medway v *Chelmsford (5.15); Murrayfield v Solihull* (8.0); Paisley v Dumfries (3.0); Peterborough v Manchester (2.0).
Hockey
JUNIOR COUNTY CHAMPIONSHIP: *East* (10.0, Dereham)
U-17/15 DIVISIONAL TOURNAMENTS (9.15, Bristol).
MEN'S CLUBS: Bexleyheath v Polygons; Bluefriars v Peterborough; *Boyne Hill v* Wokingham; Colchester v Norwich City; Dereham v Pelicans (3.30); Enfield v Broxbourne; Frebrands II v Westbury; Haverhill v Upminster; Newport v Chepstow; Oxford Hawks v City of Oxford; WGC v Bedford (1.0); Westcliff v Southend (2.15); Woking v Ashford (Mx).
WOMEN'S U-21 TERRITORIAL TOURNAMENT (10.0, Aurora SC, Rotherham); South v West Midlands v East (12.0); North v South (2.0).
WOMEN'S U-18/16 TERRITORIAL TOURNAMENTS (10.0, Concord SC, Sheffield)
WOMEN'S CLUBS: Cheshunt v Crosby; Deeside v Colwyn Bay; Epsom v Teddington; Havant v Wimborne (1.30); Hounslow v Richmond (2.30), Letchworth v Broxbourne (12.0); Norwich City v Harleston M (1.0); Staines v Ashford (Mx) (11.30)

Cricket
England tour to SA
Match Reports
0891 22 88 29
Calls cost 39p/min cheap rate, 49p/min at all other times. Supplied by: IMS, 15 Mark Lane, Leeds LS1 6LB.
Helpline: 0171 713 4473
Sport @TheGuardian

Cross Country

Britons out to prove their worth

Steve Bierley

BRITAIN's male distance runners, after a season of being beaten over the head by their critics, have summoned up something approaching a snarl towards the end of this year with through-the-teeth barks of "we're as good as anybody".

This afternoon, at the Bupa international race in Durham, part of the IAAF Challenge circuit, they will be out to prove it. Since the eight-year-old race gained Challenge status, in 1991, the Africans have been dominant, but this may not be so today.

Before anybody supposes that an upsurge in spirits, much boosted by Andrew Pearson's bronze medal in the European Championships at Alnwick, has been matched by a devastating increase in calibre, it should be pointed out that the organisers have struggled to attract top foreign competition.

John Ngugi, the five-times world cross country champion, is in the field but the Kenyan's form is uncertain. The main danger to a posse of top British runners is Ethiopia's Assefa Mezgebu, the world junior cross country champion, who has recently been flitting across European fields in hot pursuit of the Kenyans.

Pearson, full of confidence, may be Britain's best hope of a victory while the form of Rob Denmark, John Nuttall and Paul Evans will be eyed with special interest with an Olympic year about to unfold.

The correlation between cross country and track at the top is undisputed. Denmark, the Commonwealth 5,000 metres champion, has been urged by Brendan Foster to get stuck into the mud. "I think Rob now understands cross country is what helped make the African nations great on the track," he said.

Rugby League

Regal semi-final off as fixture chaos looms

Paul Fitzpatrick

AN ill-fated centenary season lost more of its fading lustre when today's Regal Trophy semi-final between St Helens and Warrington was postponed because of the frozen Knowsley Road pitch.

It will now be played next Thursday, only three days after the New Year's Day fixtures between Warrington and Wigan at Wilderspool and St Helens and Leeds at Knowsley Road.

Saints and Warrington were also due to meet next Friday in a league game to be televised by Sky. That will now be played next Sunday with Sky switching its cameras to Sheffield Eagles v Bradford Bulls.

Bradford should be guaranteed play on Monday whatever the weather. They will meet Halifax on the heated pitch at Huddersfield's McAlpine Stadium (noon) in a match postponed from Boxing Day.

If the icy conditions continue, the centenary season could end in chronic fixture congestion. Steve Simms, the Halifax coach, offered the most radical solution: abandon the season.

But clubs have received a circular from the RFL's media manager, Paul Harrison, ordering them to desist from "irresponsible behaviour that is extremely damaging to the game, our sponsors and television partners".

Harrison added that to have provided clubs with only "four or five home fixtures between August and March 29 would have been financial suicide".

● St Helens have been ordered to appear before a League inquiry in Leeds next Friday to explain why they fielded a weakened team in the 58–4 Boxing Day defeat at Wigan.

Cricket

South Africa v England: fourth Test, fourth day

England bowlers keep door ajar

Question time . . . Atherton converses with Mitchley after a Cork ball was called 'wide' PHOTOGRAPH: MIKE HEWITT

Mike Selvey
In Port Elizabeth

AFTER three days of turgid action cricket at its most bemusing and beguiling returned to St George's Park yesterday, leaving the outcome of the fourth Test hanging in the balance.

It was not a run-soaked day — only 195 scored from 88 overs — and, superficially, scarcely something to send critical the experimental cardiographs the umpires are wearing to test their stress levels. But what drama.

England, having extended their first-innings total from 250 for seven to 263 all out first thing, had to rely on an attack depleted by the loss (with a thigh strain) of Mark Ilott. His tour now seems over. But, inspired by the irrepressible Dominic Cork, the bowlers put the horrors of the first South Africa innings behind them.

They rose splendidly to the challenge and, against all expectation, had South Africa reeling at 69 for six in the second innings halfway through the middle session, a lead of 234. The game was there for the winning.

A seventh-wicket riposte of 66 from Gary Kirsten and Shaun Pollock redressed the balance, however, pushing England on to the back foot and, after tea, reducing them to the somewhat shabby and controversial tactic of firing the ball down the leg side in an attempt to delay a declaration.

It finally came, though, at 162 for nine, shortly after Kirsten had been caught on the boundary for 69, leaving England needing 328 to win and nine overs in the evening to negotiate, something that Mike Atherton and Alec Stewart managed while scoring 20.

To score 308 more runs on a fifth-day pitch, against quality bowlers with some uneven bounce and large areas of rough to exploit, represents a tall order, particularly when none of the first four days has produced more than 238 runs.

But Atherton has already shown in this series that doing the impossible is an everyday task for him. The draw remains favourite and, of course, South Africa just might blow England away. But one never knows: today, with the weather set fair and a vibrantly African crowd in full voice, promises to be a humdinger.

Picking winning numbers in the lottery is a doddle compared to attempting a prediction of England bowling performances, so recklessly do they lurch between triumph and disaster.

In the South Africa first innings they were hopeless. Yesterday, just when they should have been on their uppers — and aided by some pitiful batting — the three fit men responded heroically: Cork reeled off the first 20 overs from the Duck Pond End, including a trademark three-wicket burst in the middle that sent back Jonty Rhodes, Brian McMillan and Dave Richardson in the space of 17 balls without cost; Martin sent down seven consecutive maiden overs at the start and collected the wickets of Andrew Hudson and Hansie Cronje for his effort; and Richard Illingworth bottled up an end and cashed in with three wickets as a result.

Jack Russell, meanwhile, is gradually elevating himself to something approaching cult status. He collected three more catches yesterday, as well as a pickpocket's stumping to remove Daryll Cullinan, and now has 23 victims in this series from only five innings.

Given that Alan Knott's England Test wicketkeeping record is only one more (and that in a six-Test series, in Australia in 1970-71) and that Rodney Marsh's world record for a series is 28, it is an astounding performance. Russell was miffed yesterday when he conceded his first byes of the match, thanks to a wild bouncer from Cork and a faster ball which fizzed outside leg stump by Illingworth.

The early South Africa collapse was much of their own making. Hudson and Cronje, for example, played loose strokes to swinging deliveries (Martin at least gaining his reward for keeping the ball up to the bat) and Cullinan, frustrated by Illingworth's line from over the wicket, swung agriculturally.

Cork's burst, however, was typical of those that have made him such a dangerous and respected Test match bowler in a short space of time.

Rhodes, the first of his three victims, might count himself unlucky to be given leg-before but McMillan, who survived a similar shout first ball, gloved a bouncer to Graeme Hick at leg slip four balls after Atherton had moved the fielder there and Richardson was drawn into playing at an away swinger. When the adrenalin flows, and he gets on a roll, Cork is brilliant.

The leg-side negativity which followed, and presumably was adopted at the instigation of Atherton, is by no means a new tactic (Trevor Bailey once prevented Australia winning a Test at Headingley exlusively by this device) but has been largely eradicated along with other time-wasting tactics.

At one point yesterday Cyril Mitchley, standing at Cork's end, intervened and spoke first to the bowler and then to Atherton, citing no doubt Law 42.2, which makes the umpires the sole arbiters of fair and unfair play.

Cork's response was to mix up the legside stuff with a couple of stratospheric bouncers and some slower deliveries. Later Mitchley signalled a wide as Cork drifted almost diagonally down Pollock's legside and Atherton, who has not been best disposed towards the umpire since his dismissal on Thursday, sidled over to find out why.

It transpired that Mitchley felt the batsman could not reach the ball. Sometimes it is easy to imagine intrigue where none exists.

Scoreboard

SOUTH AFRICA: First innings 428 (D J Cullinan 91, D J Richardson 84, G Kirsten 51, D G Cork 4-113).

ENGLAND

First innings (overnight 250-7)

†R C Russell c Cullinan b Donald	30
R K Illingworth c Hudson b Donald	28
P J Martin b Adams	4
M C Ilott not out	0
Extras (lb9, w1, nb9)	19
Total (120.4 overs)	383

Fall of wickets: 258, 263.

Bowling: Donald 25.4-7-48-3; Pollock 22-8-56-3; Adams 37-13-75-3; Matthews 20-7-42-0; McMillan 15-6-30-1, Cronje 1-1-0-0.

SOUTH AFRICA

Second innings

A C Hudson c Russell b Martin	4
G Kirsten c Illingworth b Martin	69
*W J Cronje c Russell b Martin	5
D J Cullinan st Russell b Illingworth	14
J N Rhodes lbw b Cork	0
B M McMillan c Hick b Cork	1
†D J Richardson c Russell b Cork	0
S M Pollock c Cork b Illingworth	32
C R Matthews c & b Illingworth	5
A A Donald not out	12
P R Adams not out	0
Extras (b8, lb7, w1, nb3)	19
Total (for 9 dec, 65.3 overs)	162

Fall of wickets: 6, 18, 60, 65, 69, 89, 135, 146, 160.

Bowling: Cork 26.3-5-63-3; Martin 17-8-39-3, Illingworth 22-7-45-3

ENGLAND

Second innings

*M A Atherton not out	9
A J Stewart not out	8
Extras (nb3)	3
Total (for 0, 9 overs)	20

To bat: J E R Gallian, G P Thorpe, G A Hick, R A Smith, †R C Russell, D G Cork, M C Ilott, P J Martin, R K Illingworth.

Bowling: Pollock 2-0-4-0; Donald 2-0-9-0; Adams 3-2-4-0; McMillan 2-1-3-0.

Umpires: C J Mitchley and S A Bucknor.

Surgeon supports spinner

David Hopps on the evidence that might clear Muralitharan

IT IS a fair bet that when the Sri Lanka off-spinner Muttiah Muralitharan was called for "throwing" in Perth last week no one in authority thought of using a goniometer. A Melbourne surgeon did that yesterday and his evidence may be enough to prove the player's innocence.

A goniometer measures the angle of fixed deformity and, specifically in the case of Muralitharan, the bent right arm that caused his bowling action to be deemed illegal.

Barclay Reid, a former Sri Lankan doctor, examined Muralitharan during the second Test against Australia in Melbourne yesterday and confirmed a fundamental 32 degree angle in his right arm. His full report, commissioned by the Sri Lanka management, will be urgently forwarded to the offices of the International Cricket Council at Lord's.

Muralitharan was called seven times by the Australian umpire Darrell Hair during the first Test in Perth as a three-year whispering campaign about his unusual action finally took effect. The ICC supported the umpire, with its chief executive David Richards calling for Sri Lanka to take remedial action.

Reid's confidential report will also refer to a 26-degree disability in Muralitharan's left arm, as well as pointing out that the Tamil's three brothers in Kandy, capital of Sri Lanka's hill country, have the same genetic condition.

The surgeon contends that Muralitharan's arm remains rigid during his bowling action. He proposes that this natural bend, combined with an unusually supple cocked wrist, might give the false impression to an umpire standing behind him that he is throwing.

Under Law 24 a bowler should be called for throwing if the arm straightens during the delivery. If Muralitharan's arm remains locked, the fact that it is bent is immaterial.

Reid concludes: "The angle of the elbow is maintained at 32 degrees during the delivery of the ball."

Muralitharan could recently claim to be the world's leading off-spinner but his form has deteriorated as scepticism about his action has increased.

Heartened by the medical evidence in his favour — and by the fact that he has not been called by the neutral umpire, New Zealand's Steve Dunne, at Perth or Melbourne — he has vowed to clear his name.

"I was playing in my 23rd Test and had bowled about 6,000 deliveries and no umpire had ever called me. In Perth I bowled 31 balls and Darrell Hair called seven. My arm was born like that. I'm different from other off-spin bowlers. That's why they think I'm a chucker."

● Sri Lanka made 284 for six to lead Australia by 17 runs at the end of the fourth day of the second Test in Melbourne yesterday. Asanka Gurusinha, the left-handed No. 3, frustrated Australia for nearly six hours as he hit 143, his highest Test score, to save the tourists from a second successive innings defeat.

Rugby Union

Armstrong enters new age

Gordon Lyle meets the former Scotland scrum-half about to join the list of players seeking lucrative careers with Newcastle

AT THE age of 29 Gary Armstrong finally becomes a full-time player with Newcastle next week, almost two years after the Scottish Rugby Union pointed him on the road to professionalism.

The irony of an organisation which is nothing if not apprehensive about the consequences of playing for pay unwittingly helping him make up his mind will not be lost on Armstrong, capped 30 times and expected to earn more than £150,000 during the next three years.

Nor will his vision of a future in which he sees rugby, 10 years from now, operating like soccer does today, evoke a feeling of reassurance at Murrayfield.

"My contract with Newcastle was a long time going through the lawyers and will be for promoting the game until next season," he says. "That is what constitutes full-blown professionalism, with transfers and that sort of thing."

Armstrong, who will be eligible for Newcastle's last four games in Division Two of the Courage League, sees immediate benefits. "From the start at Newcastle I will have the time to be able to work on getting rid of my weaknesses.

"We have to accept money is in the game and get on with it. The days of rugby being a social occasion have gone out of the window.

"I have to look to the future and I must admit it helps that I can travel from Jedburgh without having to uproot my kids from school and the move has come at a time when I was thinking of changing my job anyway.

"I have been driving a local firm's lorry for three and a half years and that is longer than I usually stay in the same job, although I did have seven years working on a farm when I was younger."

Armstrong will be renewing a half-back partnership with Rob Andrew, Newcastle's director of rugby, that was forged on the 1989 Lions tour of Australia.

It is a coming together Armstrong relishes. "Rob is one of the decent blokes and I'm pleased about the type of player he has been signing. There are no posers among them and Newcastle have the makings of a very workmanlike side."

Armstrong was influenced in his move by Sir John Hall, the businessman whose annexing of Newcastle as part of a Tyneside sporting revival sparked one of the most dramatic periods in rugby history. "I've met Sir John a couple of times and you would never know he has millions of pounds behind him," says Armstrong. "He knows what he wants and has no time for wasters.

"In this era it is the administrators who have to adjust. Sir John used to be a miner and, like our family, he had to struggle for money."

This is the same Hall who, when he first appeared on the rugby scene, was witheringly denounced by Jim Telfer, Scotland's director of rugby, who said: "Sir John is on an ego trip like other megalomaniacs who buy soccer clubs."

Since then Telfer, who fears a player exodus south, has championed the cause of Scottish district teams entering future European Cups.

Armstrong's insistence that rugby is going down the soccer route is revealing; there are no *middle* tiers in that game — something Telfer may eventually be forced to accept.

Few will begrudge Armstrong his opportunity after a series of injuries which would have ended the career of a less resolute individual. Twice he has been sidelined with a shattered knee and in between he dislocated his thumb so badly in his last international for Scotland — against Ireland in March 1984 — that the digit rotated 90 degrees in its socket.

Typically Armstrong played on, telling the physio who attended him on the pitch: "Just stick a bandage on and I'll be fine." Afterwards his father remarked: "Sometimes I think Gary is from another planet."

Armstrong's move comes a couple of months after his autobiography was published. To many the title, Jethart's Here, will be regarded as cryptic and even esoteric, being taken from a song title associated with his home town of Jedburgh. From Tuesday Jethart's Gone or even Howay Jethart might be more appropriate.

Yet only last April the SRU's chief executive Bill Hogg declared in the programme for an international against Romania: "It would seem that most people, including the players, want the game to remain amateur. What would be the benefits of the professional game? Not many."

This same governing body, however, once helped Armstrong win a fitness battle by arranging for him to have afternoons off work to train every day for a month to flog himself back into shape for the 1994 Calcutta Cup.

"I had a wee taste of professionalism before Scotland's last home game with England and fair enjoyed it," he admits.

Then, in his phlegmatic style, the scrum-half who looks forward to clocking on at Kingston Park on Tuesday, adds: "Professionalism is a big step for everybody. If you don't try it, you don't know what it will be like. Folk who say they don't want to play rugby for money are lying."

Last hurrah . . . Gary Armstrong in action in the 1994 Calcutta Cup match

Wheeler is Leicester's paid boss

PETER WHEELER, the former England captain, is switching from amateur president of Leicester to become the club's first professional chief executive.

Leicester have also appointed Ken Cure as director of administration.

Swansea face Toulouse in today's semi-final of the Heineken European Cup in France lifted by their captain Stuart Davies, Robert Jones and Aled Williams all proving their fitness. Jonathan Davies could play a part in Cardiff's semi-final with Leinster. He is on the bench after seven weeks out following a hernia operation.

Sports Betting

Gloves on to follow Brolin

Julian Turner gives weekend pointers to where the smart money may be going

THIS was the year that sports betting got big — bigger than George Foreman's breakfast; bigger even than George Foreman.

Next year the European Championship will overtake the Grand National and the 1994 World Cup to set new records for British betting. And then there are the Olympics to look forward to — a mass of events unmentioned for four years including many that people know nothing about. The good news is that most of the bookies do not either. So before next June, remember to collar some Chinese gymnastics expert or find a Greco-Roman-wrestling pen-friend and prepare for battle.

In the meantime Sports Betting will be here on Saturdays to try to point out the weekend's best-value bets, brag when they come off and keep quiet when they do not.

FOOTBALL

WHY is it that Tomas Brolin was one of the very few outfield players wearing gloves at Bolton on Wednesday? The Swede is a man who really knows about cold, so one would have thought the others might have taken the hint. Backing players to score first is not normally to be recommended but at 11-1 (with Ladbrokes) he is worth a small punt to repeat the feat at Everton.

As for the Premiership, they thought it was all over; it is not. There was a time when one could rely on Manchester United to blow a big Christmas lead in the Premiership. Unfortunately for many, the Red Devils now look likely to be the best team of the second half of the season and, if a few smugger-than-usual grins are seen at Old Trafford, one can be sure the owners had some of the 5-1 available before the Newcastle game. Do not despair. At a best price of 100-30 (Coral) they are still worth it.

AMERICAN FOOTBALL

REMARKABLY the game is now the biggest turnover sport for many of Britain's independent bookmakers. This weekend's wild card play-offs look too tricky to call but now is the time to take a plunge on the main event. Once again the real final will be the NFC Championship, which should be a toss-up between the Dallas Cowboys and the San Francisco 49ers (with Pittsburgh tipped to provide the Super Bowl opposition for the winners). Keep that Southfork nostalgia at bay and take Ladbrokes 2-1 against the 49ers continuing their dominance, bolstered by a little each-way interest in either the Steelers or the Kansas City Chiefs, both 7-1 with Bowman of London.

Results

Soccer

LEAGUE OF IRELAND: Premier Division Postponed: Dundalk v Derry C (now playing Dec 31, 3.15).

Basketball

NBA: Indiana 91, Miami 77; Detroit 113, Toronto 91; Cleveland 85, New York 76; Dallas 103, Vancouver 101 (2nd OT); Houston 97, New Jersey 92; Utah 99, Minnesota 83; San Antonio 107, LA Lakers 98.

Cricket

ONE DAY MATCH (Toowoomba): Queensland XI 236-8, 50 overs, v West Indians.

SECOND TEST (Melbourne): Australia 500-6 dec (S Waugh 131no, D Boon 110). Sri Lanka 233 (A Ranatunga 51; McGrath 5-40) and 284-6 (A Gurusinha 143).

SHEFFIELD SHIELD (Day 1): Perth: Western Australia 331-5 (J Langer 102no) v Victoria. Adelaide: South Australia 290-6 (P Nobes 58) v Queensland.

Chess

GRONINGEN TOURNAMENT (Neth): Round 9: M Adams (Eng) 1, G Kamsky (US) 0; J Lautier (Fr) 0, I Sokolov (Bos) 1; J Piket (Neth) 1, P Leko (Hun) 0; S Tiviakov (Rus) 1, L van Wely (Neth) 0; A Karpov (Rus) ½, P Svidler (Rus) ½; C Hansen (Den) ½, Z Almasi (Hun) ½. Standings: Karpov 6; Sokolov 5½; Kamsky, Svidler 5; Adams 4.

GRONINGEN OPEN: Round 9: Leaders: A Onischuk (Ukr) 7½; E Rozentalis (Lith) 7; J Howell, A Summerscale (Eng) and 7 others 6½.

HASTINGS PREMIER: Round 2: T Luther (Ger) ½, J Speelman ½; A Miles 0, S Conquest 1; A Yermolinsky (US) ½, B Lalic (Cro) ½; S Atalik (Tur) 0, A Khalifman (Rus) 1; Sadler ½, Hodgson ½. Leaders: Conquest 2; Khalifman, Lalic 1½.

Darts

WORLD CHAMPIONSHIPS (Purfleet): Group 2: K Deller (Eng) bt S Downs (US) 3-1. Group 3: P Evison (Eng) bt G Mawson (Can) 3-0. Group 5: L Butler (US) bt N Justice (Eng) 3-2. Group 7: A Warriner (Eng) bt G Stoddart (Eng) 3-2. Group 8: E Bristow (Eng) bt R Gardner (Eng) 3-2.

BRITISH OPEN (Earls Court, London): Men: Quarter-finals: R Scholten (Neth) bt M Clark (Kent) 2-0; P Doggett (London) bt R Barneveld (Neth) 2-1; B Taylor (Scot) bt R Baxter (Lancs) 2-1; M King (Norfolk) bt P Hogan (Hants) 2-1. Semi-finals: Scholten bt Doggett 2-0; Taylor bt King 2-1. Final: Scholten bt Taylor 2-0.

Women: Semi-finals: D Hedman (Essex) bt H Ernst (Ger) 3-1; P Dyer (Middx) bt T Wright (London) 3-0. Final: Dyer bt Hedman 3-2.

Hockey

MENZIESHILL INDOOR TOURNAMENT (Dundee): Gordonians 8, Bell Inns 2; Menzieshill 7, Torbrex W 2; Scotland U-21 4, Dita Travellers 4; Gordonians 1, Torbrex W 9; Scotland U-21 7, Bell Inns 2; Menzieshill 3, O Loughtonians 6; Gordonians 4, Scotland U-21 3; Torbrex W 6, Loughtonians 7; Menzieshill 7, Dita Travellers 1. Final: Menzieshill 1, O Loughtonians 12; 2, Menzieshill 10; 3, Torbrex 8.

WOMENS U-21 TERRITORIAL TOURNAMENT (Rotherham): North 0, East 5; South 1, Midlands 5; West 0, East 2; North 1, Midlands 6. Standings: 1, East 9; 2 Midlands 9; 3 West 1.

Ice Hockey

NHL: Washington 5, Florida 4; Pittsburgh 9, Hartford 4; Tampa Bay 3, Montreal 1; Chicago 4, Winnipeg 3; St Louis 4, Dallas 1; NY Rangers 3, Vancouver 2.

Alpine Skiing

WORLD CUP (Bormio, It): Men's downhill: 1, L Kjus (Nor) 1min 55.36sec; 2, A Schifferer (Aut) 1.55.66; 3, E Podivinsky (Can) 1.56.88; 4, W Perathoner (It) 1.56.87; 5, A Skaardal (Nor) 1.56.91; 6, P Runggaldier (It) 1.56.12. Also 30, G Bell (GB); 50, A Freshwater (GB). Standings (after four races): 1, L Alphand (Fr) 280pts; 2, Kjus 225; 3=, P Ortlieb (Aut), X Gigandet (Switz) 175. Overall standings: 1, Kjus 885pts; 2, M Von Gruenigen (Switz) 496; 3, H Knaus (Aut) 390; 4, A Tomba (It) 356. Nations Cup standings: 1, Aut 5,089pts; 2, Switz 3,040; 3, It 2,227; 4, Nor 2,118; 5, Ger 1,687; 6, Fr 1,695.

WORLD CUP (Semmering, Aut): Women's slalom: 1, P Wiberg (Swe) 1min 40.28sec; 2, K Roten (Switz) 1.41.20; 3, E Eder (Aut) 1.41.76. Standings: 1, E Eder (Aut) 280pts; 2, P Wiberg (Swe) 200; 3, U Hrovat (Slovenia) 192. Overall standings: 1, A Meissnitzer (Aut) 488pts; 2, A Wachter (Aut) 478; 3, M Ertl (Ger) 433.

Sport in brief

Cricket

West Indies' captain Richie Richardson steered his side to the first win of their Australian tour with a seven-wicket defeat of a Queensland XI in a one-day match in Toowoomba. Richardson scored 75 not out from 84 deliveries as the West Indians overtook the Queenslanders' 237 for eight from 50 overs.

Hockey

Old Loughtonians, the English indoor champions, became the first English club to win the Menzieshill invitation indoor tournament in Dundee, winning their final two games to finish with maximum points, *writes Pat Rowley*.

Motor Racing

Honda, whose engines powered five drivers to world titles and helped win six constructors' crowns, are considering returning to the Formula One circuit in 1997.

Diving

The 21-year-old Russian Yelena Miroshina, a silver medallist at the 1992 Barcelona Olympics, has been found dead at the foot of the Moscow apartment block where she lived on the ninth floor.

Ice Hockey

Chinn steps straight back into Steelers line-up

Vic Batchelder

NICKY CHINN, the Great Britain international forward, will return to the Sheffield Steelers line-up for their home game against Basingstoke tonight having completed a mandatory three-game ban for his part in an incident which left Durham's Ross Lambert with serious facial injuries during a game in Sunderland a fortnight ago.

However, Chinn, arrested at the time by the local police before being bailed pending inquiries, knows he faces the possibility of further punishment from within the sport once the result of those investigations is made known.

In making that decision the British Ice Hockey Association disciplinary chief Frank Dempster said yesterday he will follow an established precedent by allowing an individual to continue playing pending a police investigation.

"Until somebody tells me it's not going legal I've got to let the boy play on. Although I've got to deal with him under the sport's rules, I have also got to protect his civil rights. I cannot prejudge possible police action on things like this," said Dempster.

With outdoor sport all over the country falling foul of the freezing outside temperatures, ice hockey has also become a victim, albeit for different reasons.

The BIHA has agreed to the postponement of three matches in the next five days due to clubs losing players to the Great Britain Under 21 team which left for Slovenia yesterday to compete in Pool C of the World Junior Championships. In the Premier Division tonight's Durham Wasps game at Milton Keynes goes ahead at 6.30pm but only as a challenge match, the same status being conferred on Wasps' away fixture with Newcastle Warriors next Wednesday.

Tonight's Division One game between Swindon and Guildford will not be played, although Swindon have been told they must fulfil tomorrow's fixture at Bracknell.

SOCCER: Blackburn gorges, England starves — the Shearer enigma, page 10

SportsGuardian

ENGLAND FACE THEIR LONGEST DAY AS FOURTH TEST HANGS IN THE BALANCE

Howzat! Well, he looked out to us all right. It's just this waiting for the TV to warm up we can't stand

SOMETIMES the wait is worth it. England's massed ranks look anxiously towards the third umpire who eventually gave Daryll Cullinan out, stumped off Richard Illingworth, in Port Elizabeth yesterday.

But not everything went the tourists' way. South Africa, who at one stage were 69 for six, fought their back to declare just before the close on 162 for nine. England, resuming today on 20 for nought, need another 308 runs for victory. More likely they will have to bat 90 overs to keep the series deadlocked and inevitably most of their hopes will be pinned on Michael Atherton this morning.

England's captain, who was controversially given out caught behind by Cyril Mitchley on Thursday, yesterday had another brush with the umpire who spoke to him when Dominic Cork bowled a series of balls deliberately down the leg side as Gary Kirsten and Shaun Pollock tried to set up the declaration.

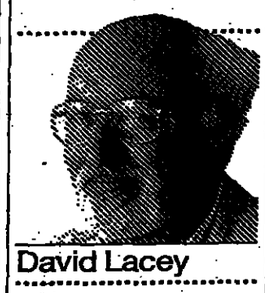
Later Kirsten also questioned England's approach: "Maybe it's a good idea but it just seems like negative cricket to me," he said. "I haven't seen it happen too often. You would think maybe they would have wanted to bowl us out."

South Africa's coach Bob Woolmer was more sympathetic, saying: "It's not the greatest part of the game of cricket but, given the situation, I can understand why it was being done."

Asked whether his team would resort to the same tactics, Woolmer said: "I hope not, no."

Mike Selvey, page 11

Old scores that roll into a new year



David Lacey

WHAT's in a year, anyway? Football is better measured by its seasons, not the calendar, and the English game has yet to be persuaded that a pause for breath around about this time would be to everybody's benefit.

So tomorrow night's toasts will merely remind football that from Monday cheques, solicited or otherwise, should be dated 1996. The alteration of a single digit will barely be noticed amid Manchester United's dogged pursuit of Newcastle at the top of the Premiership, the mounting intensity of the struggle to stay in it or the maelstroms of varying mundanity further below.

The only New Year event of regular significance is the third round of the FA Cup, after which the season tends to freewheel to a rapid denouement. Except this time the conclusion of the domestic programme will quickly be followed by English football's biggest event since 1966, namely the European Championship, which, it is hoped, will restore the way the country watches the game in the eyes of the world.

It does not necessarily follow, of course, that the world will be equally impressed by the way England play. The coming year will mark a number of 50th anniversaries, among them the day the FA made Walter Winterbottom its first director of coaching. The FA is about to appoint its first technical director, to work with the England coach. It is funny but at the time Winterbottom seemed to have more technique to direct.

In fact in 1946, as clubs prepared to resume league football on a normal pre-war basis, the one thing few people bothered about was the quality of the product. England could beat anybody at Wembley so what else mattered? Yet in 1946 the British decision to rejoin Fifa guaranteed the world game would become the master of its teachers.

With one exception, 50 years after the Bolton disaster and 25 after the Ibrox tragedy, the European Championship will be staged in as fine a set of football stadia as have been built in the world. Wembley remains the finest stadium built anywhere in 1923, a Barbara Cartland among football grounds, as heavy on make-up as romance. Its status as the national football stadium may be confirmed during the coming year but only if it becomes a building site towards the turn of the century.

THE better part of 1996 will be taken up with the preliminary bouts of the Premier League's next set of television negotiations. Speculation will doubtless raise the clubs' demands to £1 billion before long.

The Premier League inquiry into transfers in general and that of Teddy Sheringham from Nottingham Forest to Tottenham Hotspur in particular may or not have run its course by 1997. When Sheringham joined Spurs in the late summer of 1992 his fee of £2.1 million seemed a lot of money. Now it looks a give-away. The odds against 1996 bringing the first eight-figure English transfer are short.

It would be tempting providence to suggest that the coming 12 months will provide no more examples of the cast sorting out recalcitrant members of the audience, *à la* Cantona, police arresting players for allegedly fixing matches or high-diving managers being bunged off the deep end. Just so long as the slack-jaws do not get at another England game; at least the draw for the World Cup qualifiers will offer the shortest of shrifts for anyone mixing it in Minsk.

Among the principal hopes for 1996 is that the Premiership winners make a bigger impact on the Champions' League than they have so far; that the FA continues to judge Terry Venables by results, not headlines; and that Sir Bert Millichip realises staying on as FA chairman in his 82nd year is not on.

Geoff Thompson, who heads the FA disciplinary committee, is among Millichip's likely successors. But what about Jimmy Hill, who might be better equipped to stand up to the Premier League barons? He has been chairman of practically everything else.

League averts break-up

Martin Thorpe reports on the last-minute decision by First Division clubs to hold fire

THE 24 First Division clubs went to the brink of resigning from the Football League yesterday but, after weighing up the consequences, decided not to jump. So was averted a major breakaway which would have threatened the existence of most Second and Third Division clubs and plunged the national game into civil war.

"The League has possibly turned away from the brink of a complete break-up and I think sanity has prevailed," said a relieved Geoffrey Richmond, chairman of Second Division Bradford City. The Plymouth chairman was more direct: "They've got no spunk," said a triumphant Dan McCauley.

Many First Division clubs have long been seeking more voting power commensurate with their position as the League's top clubs. But earlier yesterday the League's EGM had voted not to give them it.

So the First Division clubs moved from the EGM in one room of a London hotel to another room nearby to discuss resignation with the three leading rebels, Crystal Palace's Ron Noades, Norwich's Robert Chase and Oldham's Ian Stott.

But their powers of persuasion proved limited and disunity soon reigned on this crucial issue. Halfway through the meeting the Luton chairman David Kohler emerged to declare: "There are 24 clubs in there and 25 opinions."

Eventually, after three hours of talks, it was accepted that the stalemate could not be broken. Fourteen clubs were in favour of resigning, eight against — Sunderland, Leicester, West Bromwich, Huddersfield, Luton, Southend, Grimsby and Barnsley — with two abstaining, Port Vale and another unidentified club. Without a larger majority, resignation was an empty gesture and the clubs were forced to backtrack.

"This is a climbdown," said Richmond. "I believe that Messrs Noades, Chase and Stott had huge support until the downsides of the resignation were forcibly put to them today at the EGM."

With Second and Third Division clubs facing the prospect of a breakaway leaving them stranded without a television deal and major sponsorship, they were prepared to fight for their life. "The Second and Third Division clubs were as one in stating that, if the First Division clubs did resign, then it would have been seen as a declaration of war and treated as such," said Richmond. "We told them we would fight this with all the weapons at our disposal."

Those weapons were: the threat of legal action against the First Division chairmen if the Football League pulled out of its £125 million Sky television deal as a result of any breakaway; the immediate suspension of the £35,000 a month which the League currently hands out to First Division clubs; an injunction to prevent First Division clubs negotiating any deals with the League's current sponsors or Sky; and a reminder to the First Division that, as soon as they resigned, under league rules all their players' registrations would revert to the League, which could sell them and keep the money.

In the face of that reality the First Division clubs decided against resigning and merely asked the League to look again at the voting structure on the League's rule-making body, the board, which the League has agreed to do. It has also agreed to look at two other undisclosed issues.

Noades, Chase and Stott left the meeting without saying anything but there was widespread condemnation of their role, with David Jolley of Stockport calling it "irresponsible" and Richmond calling it "a battle of power and egos".

And as for acceding to the First Division's continued request for more power, Richmond promised more conflict. "The whole idea of Division One having control of the League is anathema to us," he said. "It seems to be fundamental to the extremists in Division One that they have a board representation and voting power at least equal to that of the other two divisions combined. Well, on those points, there will be no surrender whatsoever from Division Two and Three."

Earlier the EGM had rubber-stamped the distribution of the £35 million a year in hand-outs to clubs from the new television and commercial deals, with £21,150,000 going to the First Division.

Icy weather cuts deep into fixtures

THE freezing weather has disrupted today's sporting programme even more than that of Boxing Day, forcing many soccer and rugby matches to be called off, ruling out turf racing completely and threatening even the all-weather meeting at Wolverhampton.

Deep frost across the country meant that three Premiership, five First Division, 10 Second Division and nine Third Division matches were called off 24 hours before kick-off. Only 19 out of 46 matches were still on but more of those will disappear today as widespread snow and frost were expected last night. In Scotland 17 of 20 matches were postponed.

The major casualties in England were Aston Villa v Sheffield Wednesday, Southampton v Manchester City and Newcastle's visit to West Ham, due to the lack of undersoil heating at the three Premiership venues.

The non-league programme has been decimated, along with rugby union's schedule of league and friendly matches. All of England's Courage League first division matches are off as well as three out of five games in Wales.

In rugby league the Regal Trophy semi-final between St Helens and Warrington, due to be televised live on Grandstand, fell by the wayside and Halifax have already postponed their New Year's Day home clash with Oldham. Instead they will travel to the Alfred McAlpine Stadium in Huddersfield to play Bradford.

Racing at Wolverhampton, planned for the afternoon and evening, was described only as "hopeful". Richard Muddle, for the course's management, said: "We need a couple of hours above freezing to be certain."

The Office of Science and Technology is the subject of a leveraged management buyout from a team advised by Mystic Meg. Chaos theory fails to predict this and the Chief Science Adviser announces his conversion to deterministic complexity, which becomes the buzz-phrase of the year.
Predictions

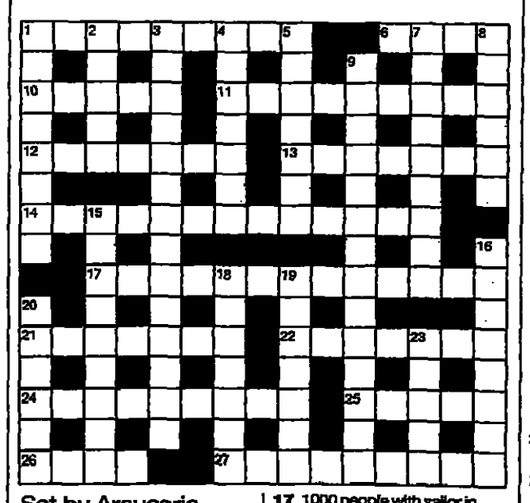
Outlook page 14

Guardian COLLINS Crossword 20,536

Indispensable to all crossword addicts! A copy of the brand new Collins Thesaurus, the ultimate browser's wordfinder will be sent to the first five correct entries drawn. Entries to Guardian Crossword No 20,536, 119 Farringdon Road, London EC1R 3ER, by first post on Friday. Solution and winners in the Guardian on Monday January 8.

Name .....

Address .....



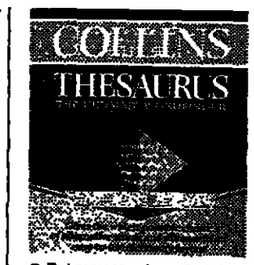
Set by Araucaria

Across

1 Motor round stalls and sideshows till one finds a place to eat (9)
6 Fish born to donkey (4)
10 Mother and I among footballers doing our thing? (5)
11 Ram and pig had issue, close to the chest (9)
12 West African people in opposition to smokers opposed (7)
13 Go away or missing (3,4)
14 Towering inferno, maybe: inferno-like expression for love and struggle (8,5)
17 1000 people with sailor in company fight for somewhere to broadcast from (10,3)
21 Complete article in Russian aircraft for Scots port (7)
22 Fragrant appeal to tub-thumper to do his stuff? (7)
24 Spooner's vendeuse does what molluscs produce (9)
25 Even lower than 6 for cats or dogs (5)
26 My French appearance? (4)
27 Happy and unhappy state played wrathfully? (5,4)

Down

1 Stop don changing raiders (8)
2 Dominant note on Guy Fawkes' day? (5)



3 Pet may stay hand? Not so; she will pour (3,3,8)
4 Advise as of old about clothing for raptor (3,4)
5 Seaweed found in a millimetre of filling (7)
7 A claw nearly gets one of two Fabians down (2,1,3,3)
8 Clothing for sword-arm: hit without one (6)
9 I'm not arguing: at every level the States follow, within reason (8,3,3)
15 Time to recover from reaper's welcome (4,5)
16 Parrot leaves stage to ask how one voted (4,4)
18 Fruit, for example: doctor gets some illumination (3-4)
19 Sort of suit for model with rising bell? (7)
20 Stomach order with some money (6)
23 A republican language? Say yes (5)

CROSSWORD SOLUTION 20,533

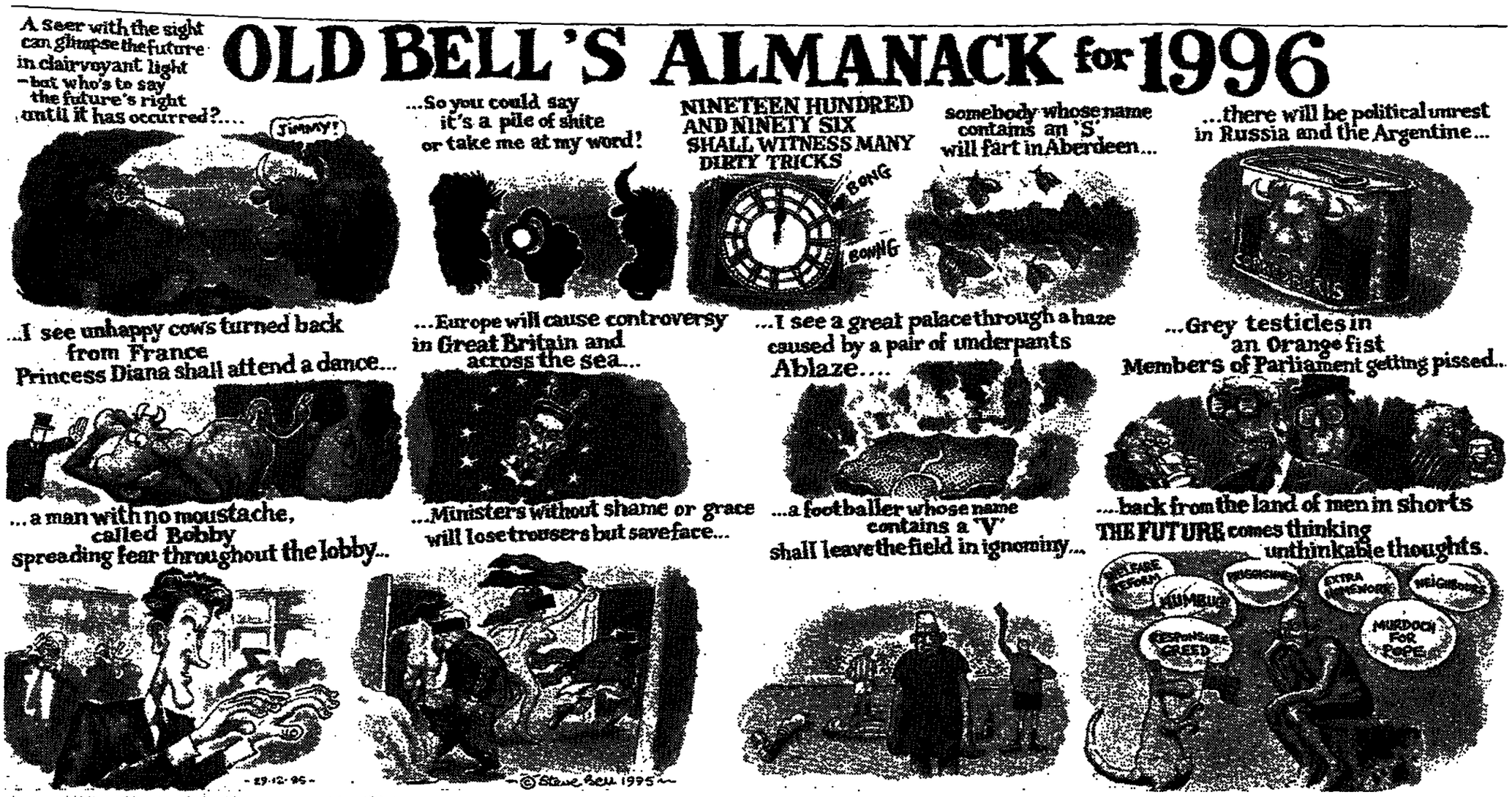
17 **Interview** Murray Walker — motormouth of the race track

18 **Arts** A return to India with the late Louis Malle

20 **Money** Sun, sea and sand beckon, thanks to maturing Tessas

24 **Finance** Workshop of the world — now under new ownership

The Guardian
Outlook



OLD BELL'S ALMANACK for 1996

MARTIN WOOLLACOTT kicks off three pages of analysis on how 1996 may unfold by urging that we use the run-up to the millennium to create a more equal world

2000 AD — time to start anew

THE images are familiar but shadowy, as in a dream. First, there are the men in suits, at a chateau or grand hotel, sometimes solemn, sometimes smiling. Secondly, the turtle figures of flak-jacketed soldiers, in snowscape or desert, or lying prone near broken buildings. Then, a child crying or laughing, somebody in a hospital bed, or an old lady who is a century old. Finally, a flash of physical grace as athletes or actors move across the screen.

This, at one level of perception, is the news at ten, or at any other time. The suits, the soldiers, the children, the stars, all too easily blur into a repetitive continuum. And, if you try harder to grasp the detail, something else becomes clear — the sheer indigestibility of events as they tumble forth. In pre-spaghetti 19th century Denmark, Soren Kierkegaard wrote brilliantly of the endless nature of news: "It seems to me rather like eating some dish . . . in which there are long stringy bits. One takes a forkful, but look out! Just as one is about to put it in one's mouth, a whole lot remains dangling outside, so that one must resort to the fork again to gather up the loose ends; but that is not enough, one also has to resort to the knife, one has to use both hands; but that is not enough, and in the end a waiter has to hold a plate or bowl underneath — it is enough to drive one mad! Do you call this eating? And so it is with the events of our time."

Kierkegaard's moral is that if you lose the thread, the meaning that connects events, then everything is a surprise, nothing makes sense and you cannot take it in. As we approach a millennium that still has a residual significance, it is obvious that the most important battlefield of all is the one where human beings try to wrest meaning from events. The millennium is a reminder that westerners, and all those touched by western thinking, which is to say most people on the globe, have always needed at least the idea that history moves forward to a great renewal, to a breakthrough that brings the good and even the perfect society. We need both apocalypse and millennium as symbols, the one of the worst we can create on earth, the other of the good potentially within our reach.

What we require now, it could be said, is a new millennialism. What we have, instead, is a sense of loss. The cold war delayed the decline of purpose, gave all three sides a rationale, and seemed to be a contest about the future. Now the contest is over but, unfortunately, we seem to have mislaid the future along with it.

This malaise affects all of what it became fashionable, some years ago, to call our "projects". In 1996, many of these will be under strain. The great projects of national and regional construction in Europe, America, Russia, China, Japan, India, the lands of classic Islam and South Africa, to name the most prominent, are all troubled. In each case there is a mismatch, sometimes an agonising one, between historic aspiration and present reality, and a hesitation about the future.

In Europe, the detailed bargaining about that future, which will go into a new phase when the Inter-Governmental Conference opens in Turin in March is less important than the broad question of whether Europe can overcome the social inequalities which are becoming more and more visible. That there will be a European entity, that Germany will be its strongest component and that German money, however called, will be its anchor is not much in doubt. Whether there will be a European democracy worthy of the name and whether Europe will retreat from a century of social achievement unfortunately is.

America is disturbed in its own special ways. Domestic divisions plague it. Chunks of its educational system have been taken over by the self-esteem industry, while others are simply collapsing. An emphasis on the perogatives of the individual and the group has undermined the national project. But, as in Europe, growing social inequality is the most basic flaw and a government tied to policies which tend to increase it the basic problem.

President Clinton and whoever else contends for the presidency in November are likely to do so on the narrow ground of conventional policies that have failed in the past. Abroad, the United States seems sometimes to fulfil its historic role as an arbiter, sometimes to parody it. The many differences between Russia and America aside, the two countries are equally lost without an internal mission of solidarity and an external role in settling the affairs of the world. The need for both will shape the Russian presidential elections in June.

In China and India, we are nearing the end of national missions aimed at catching up with the West while preserving unity and control at home. The two share the central problem of economic "liberalisation" — a social polarisation that may never be repaired and which flies in the face of ideals by which they were theoretically guided. India's difficulties of communal and caste division are thus compounded — which may be reflected in its general elections in the spring — as are China's already large regional disparities. China, continuing to be mindlessly assertive, could mismanage both Taiwan in an election year and Hong Kong in its last year before reintegration. Japan has never had problems of unity and control at home, but it is a country which has caught up so effectively with the west that it hardly knows what to do with itself any more.

In the Islamic lands, the shortfall between historic ambition and achievment is perhaps greatest of all. Turkey's modern course wavers as its Islamist party, although relatively moderate, grows. On the other hand, Iran's revolution has failed to deliver most of what it promised. Algeria, after all the agony, may have turned a corner with its general elections. But the Islamic world hangs uneasily between a secular path which nowhere has been a clear success and a variety of Islamist alternatives which are also dubious.

In this limbo the Arab-Israeli process continues, with Syrian-Israeli negotiations just renewed and a critical Israeli general election toward the end of the year. South of the Sahara, much depends on the South African republic, the potential powerhouse of a new Africa. But its ambitions are threatened by the contradictions between the simultaneous desires to be an African, a multi-racial and a capitalist success.

Different though these projects are, most of them have in common a certain exhaustion or a half-realised inadequacy. Most, too, have been undermined by economic processes that increase social inequality. Everywhere in the world those in power are enriching themselves, both legally and illegally, while exhorting their populations to lead more dangerous lives. In Rome, in Paris, in New Delhi, politicians are discovered living in

> The question is whether Europe can overcome the social inequalities which are more and more visible

luxury flats for which they pay little or no rent. In Beijing, Moscow and Warsaw quick movers, often former communist officials, have annexed public wealth and now call it their own.

In Britain, America, and even in countries like Sweden, the same business executives who sack thousands of workers award themselves multi-million pension packages. The problem is not so much greed in itself. The essence of the crisis is provided by the picture of politicians and businessmen giving themselves ever larger incomes and perquisites while presiding over economic changes to which they claim there is no alternative, but which threaten the security of millions. In nearly every country these changes have been embraced by those in power, in government and business, in a spirit that unhappily combines conformity with inhumanity.

This is reflected in a worldwide battle for language. Senator Patrick Moynihan recently castigated the use of the phrase "welfare reform" when what was really meant was welfare repeal. There are some contexts where the word welfare never appears without a Homeric adjective like "overblown", "bloated" or, at a minimum, "costly".

On the other hand, welfare is a key word in the vocabulary of fundamentalists and the creation of alternative welfare states a key political tactic, as in Turkey, where the very name of the Islamist party means welfare. We used to complain about the euphemisms that masked the terrible nature of nuclear warfare. Now we have euphemisms for social devastation, and even mystical claims that tend to divert attention from what modern societies have to face.

When national missions falter and when the model of prosperity and solidarity seems less attainable, it is no surprise that nations pay less attention to keeping the international peace. There is no obvious basis in our minds for the risking of men and money to set things right. It may nevertheless be the case that 1996 will be negotiated without too much new fighting. The wounds there are will continue to bleed, in Kashmir, Algeria, Kurdistan or Chechnya. The ceasefires in Ireland, Bosnia and the Middle East will probably hold.

President Clinton claims some credit for all three and it would be wrong to deny it. But it is also true that America's work of peace remains tentative, and conditional on low costs and on political rewards at home and abroad. Throughout the world, the transition from national armies to multi-national forces working for goals of collective security — a transition that many had hoped for after 1989 — has halted. Armies, in fact, are justifying themselves neither by peacekeeping nor by national defence properly defined. But they are intent on institutional survival and on maintaining connections with advanced science and with industry. Espionage services, similarly, are now seeking market legitimisation as they swing to commercial spying and the monitoring of illicit trade, such as drug trafficking.

The world's most common problem is legitimacy, the legitimacy of goals and the legitimacy of leaders. This is not so much a world of richer and poorer but a world in which the leading classes attend to their own security while only half-heartedly pursuing the task of ensuring that of the majority. The sense of the future has slipped badly, enfeebling the historic missions of nations as well as the ideal of the ultimate achievment of international comity. Our need for a renewal of legitimacy and of a future that can deliver shows itself in many ways, one of which is the extraordinary hope invested in the Internet, which is acquiring a curiously religious connotation.

It is new, it is all-pervasive. It is, like the Holy Ghost, insubstantial and yet present everywhere. It transports its users weightlessly and effortlessly around its virtual geography. In the beginning was the Web? Somehow, it is hinted, this new form of communication will produce the explosion of growth, the expansion of knowledge, and the means of global democracy that the world requires. Yet the promise of the Web is vague, and the reality of hardship today and perhaps of worse tomorrow is clear.

Outlook Predictions, page 14 and 15

Sinutab
• Clears nasal and sinus congestion
• Relieves headache and pain
Always read the label.

Painful blocked sinuses? Let double action Sinutab lend a hand.

Pressure from blocked sinuses can cause severe pain and headaches. Specially formulated Sinutab with its double action acts quickly to relieve the pain and ease the congestion. What's more, Sinutab Nightime will also aid restful sleep.

Realism and the new world order

JOINING HANDS and wishing for peace on earth is an easy New Year's resolution. But what sort of world is really worth striving for in 1996? We believe first and foremost that nation states should acknowledge the principle of internationalism — even if the word has fallen out of favour — and accept obligations beyond self-interest. The only vehicle for this remains the UN, however flawed its record, with its long-term promise of a less destructive world. The verdict that it has "failed" in Bosnia is less than a half truth. Even its critics do not suggest it should withdraw, and they are quick to call for UN intervention whenever there is famine, flood or epidemic.

A commitment to a responsible world role has to be tempered by realism. Britain is now a medium-sized rather than a great power and can achieve nothing alone. Yet Britain is still one of the Permanent Five and a nuclear power. We are in favour of reforming the Security Council: we question why Britain should remain a nuclear power. But these positions, while they last, should be used constructively — in particular, to make more impact on disarmament and arms control.

If there is confusion about Britain's world status, there is more about its position in Europe. Too often the argument is put in narrow terms, sometimes reduced to absurdity. The vision of a European spirit transcending old frontiers arose from the ruins of the second world war. It is strengthened by the end of the cold war — another disaster which we seek never to repeat. But the European project should not be tied down too rigidly to the Maastricht formula which needs to be looked at more critically. We may have to ask which is more important — monetary union or full employment? We may have to insist that the narrow European track does not divert attention from the problems of a "broader" Europe.

Western attitudes towards Russia have swung wildly. Instant capitalism is not the magic answer: the transition away from so-called socialism is painful and the outcome uncertain. Russia should not be demonised even if the presidential election produces an unpleasant shock. Patiently, the West has to hold the door open and define Europe in terms which include rather than exclude.

The loosening of world power structures has also created openings to resolve long-frozen crises — in the Middle East, South Africa and now former Yugoslavia. We may be sceptical of the more extravagant claims but this does not mean falling into permanent pessimism. A sort of peace is better than war: a tentative living together is better than civil conflict.

Across the Third World, (another term fallen out of First World fashion) attention is magnetised by the economic take-off of East Asia which now spreads to South Asia. It is impressive but its negative effects on the rich-poor gap and the environment — both now causing concern in Beijing — should not be overlooked. It is not a panacea for countries in less favourable geo-economic circumstances and should not be an alibi for their neglect. We need to remind ourselves how much of Africa remains mired in poverty and how much of Latin America is trammelled by corruption. Structural adjustment as advocated by the IMF has failed to clear shanty towns or provide jobs for peasants driven off the land by soil erosion or an unforgiving market. In 1996 and after, the hundreds of millions who suffer — with women and children in the inevitable vast majority — will need our support and our aid even more.

Censorship in Cyberspace

WHO should police Cyberspace? The decision by CompuServe — the US purveyor of services to 4.5 million Internet users — to suspend access to 200 news groups following governmental concern in Germany about pornography has come at a very sensitive moment. The Telecommunications Bill currently being shunted through the US Congress is about to rule whether the Internet will continue as a libertarian culture based on the First Amendment's protection of freedom of speech or whether it will be drowned by draconian controls under the excuse of preventing "indecency". It is the electronic equivalent of the Lady Chatterley trial and no one should underestimate its importance. The core of the argument is this: the Senate wants the content of the Internet to be "dumbed down" to what is acceptable to children and holding the service providers responsible for the content. This is a bit like holding British Telecom responsible for what is said over its telephone lines. Critics say it would water content down to the level of Saturday morning cartoons and undercut the potential of the Internet as a mass medium. The House of Representatives wants parents rather then government agencies to do the policing and points out that there are plenty of software programs to prevent undesirable material being seen by children.

We have been here before. The word "indecency" means all things to all people and in the wrong hands — including some of the religious revivalists backing the Senate vote — can easily be made to embrace classics of literature as well as dangerous pornography. There is a self-evident problem about policing a world-wide network like the Internet using the legislation of individual countries. This applies not just to pornography but to libel and to the incipient problem of how to raise tax from electronic products bought (say) in Britain by tapping on a keyboard and dispatched from an off-shore source in the form of the 1s and 0s of computer code. But the fact that the global village has no global magistrate shouldn't make us prematurely question the commendable aims of universal and affordable access which make the potential of the superhighway so attractive. We shouldn't apply to seekers of erotica on the Net sanctions which wouldn't be applied elsewhere for magazines and bookshops or mail order services. Erotica, contrary to some wild estimates, doesn't dominate the Internet. It is a minority sport which children don't happen upon by chance. They have to know what they are looking for and deliberately type in the key words. The most vulnerable groups are computer-literate youngsters between the ages of 10 and 18. Parental control, helped by encoded software, will be a powerful restraint for many of them. Where erotica stoops to immoral exploitation (as with child pornography) the proper recourse is, as in real life, to a pro-active police force with a brief to prosecute the exploiters. They won't all be caught, but nor are they in the world outside. We can't expect the standards maintained on private computer networks to be higher than elsewhere. Cyberspace is an exciting new world. Utopia it's not.

Princess in waiting . . . Sophie Rhys-Jones, often seen as a Diana lookalike but, the royal family must hope, not an actalike PHOTOGRAPH: AP

Can Sophie save the Windsors?

A divorce and a wedding in the royal soap? Off-the-shelf genetic engineering kits? The economy simmers on low? 1996 awaits . . .

Royals

Ingrid Seward

THE controversy surrounding the *impending* divorce of the Prince and Princess of Wales will continue to make news. Diana is not going to give up anything without a fight and her most powerful weapon will be to hit her husband where it hurts — in his pocket.

The divorce negotiations will be fraught with more than the customary problems, as Diana is determined to ensure *she* gets what she wants before she considers giving Charles what *he* wants. Constitutional, political and emotional issues all have to be considered, discussed and decided before the Royal Family can expect any harmony.

I predict that the anticipated marriage between Prince Edward and Sophie Rhys-Jones will take place in the Guards Chapel at Windsor Castle in the early summer. It will not be a lavish wedding by royal standards, but will produce a much needed feeling of cheer amongst the Queen's subjects.

There are no special plans to commemorate Her Majesty's 70th birthday on April 21, but she will come under pressure for some celebration, probably at the time of her official birthday, marked by the Trooping The Colour in June. The 60th anniversary of the abdication of King Edward VIII on December 10 will attract much interest, commencing with Prince Edward's first major television film made by his company Ardent Productions and called Edward On Edward.

I don't see 1996 as being the easiest of years for the Royal Family, but if they face up to their problems and deal with them accordingly, the way ahead looks more promising.

Ingrid Seward is Editor in Chief of Majesty magazine

Science

Steven Rose

IN THE US, a team from the National Institutes of Health announces the discovery of three new human genes, a dominant for homophobia, a recessive for pacific, non-aggressive behaviour and a sex-linked gene on the Y-chromosome for drinking beer whilst watching TV sport. A follow-up international twin study to check the class and race distribution of these genes is commissioned.

In the UK the Government's privatisation programme for science continues with takeover bids for the Medical Research Council by Glaxo-Wellcome and the Engineering and Physics Council by Siemens. The Office of Science and Technology is the subject of a leveraged management buyout from a team advised by Mystic Meg. Chaos theory fails to predict this and the Chief Science Adviser, a world expert on this topic, announces his conversion to deterministic complexity, which becomes the buzz-phrase of the year.

Following the success of an amphetamine-based drug in helping primary school teachers manage problem eight-year-olds, a drug company patents a new agent enabling university teachers to award first-class degrees to 90 per cent of all students.

Home genetic engineering kits replace computer games as the year's hottest Christmas presents. The professor of Public Understanding of Science at Oxford follows his last book on man's evolution from Eden by a new best-seller reconciling Darwinism with God and his own conversion to Catholicism.

Steven Rose is professor of biology at the Open University

Media

David English

WHEN the Broadcasting Bill becomes law, Granada and Carlton will each push to expand. Carlton will go for HTV, Granada for Yorkshire/Tyne Tees. Newspaper competition will turn this into an acquisition battle royal.

Digital TV will continue to be talked about. Sky will keep its digital power in reserve and Virginia Bottomley will wail at British television's refusal to take a lead in the marvellous — but initially expensive — technology she is making available.

However, more and more publications will go on to the Internet and thus lose more and more money. Estimates of the number of Net users worldwide will vary from three million to two billion. No one will ever know the truth, but a huge number of company directors will believe everything they are told about the Internet. At the year end, the Daily Express will have failed to dent the Daily Mail's professional armour and the Daily Mirror, though livelier, will not have closed up on the Sun. The Mirror's Piers Morgan will prove to be a bold and instinctive tabloid genius but, as in the case of his mentor, Kelvin Mackenzie, the risk of a spectacularly destructive own goal will remain high.

Charles Wilson will reluctantly give up the editorship of the Independent to a younger man who will prove to have only half his talent, though that may be enough to save it. The Independent on Sunday will have one foot in the grave and probably both before the year ends.

The Press Complaints Commission will become stronger and more respected. Lord Wakeham will make many speeches. The Government will give up any attempts to legislate against the press.

The warring members of the Royal Family will continue to exploit the media while complaining about it. The Sun will have the bulk of the royal scoops. The Guardian will become more anti-Blair. Readers of the Telegraph will discover God figuring more on their pages.

Sir David English is Editor in Chief of Associated Newspapers

United States

Clancy Sigal

IT WILL be lousy for women and kids. America's undeclared war on them has been slightly disguised because President Clinton is a pro-family values gasbag. And his wife swans around like Princess Di, an "ambassador of the heart" bestowing the same sort of compassion on kids that her archetype, Beatrice Webb, used to show the poor. The Clintons are neo-Fabians without the socialism. Except that the Fabians knew how to get things done, while the Clintons made a hash of their much-trumpeted health scheme.

A few stats: the proportion of US children on welfare rose from 3.5 per cent in 1960 to 13 per cent in 1991, a four-fold rise through Democratic and Republican administrations alike. Infant mortality in the US remains higher than in most of western Europe. Teen pregnancy doubled between 1972 and 1990. Since 1960 the divorce rate has doubled as has the number of kids affected by divorce. Teen suicide has tripled. Today, two-thirds of children under six who live only with their mother also live in poverty.

Poverty does not necessarily breed crime, and crack mothers and Awol fathers, though indirect products of a deindustrialised, de-jobbed US, still have free will. In many of the worst housing projects, a majority of the poor somehow manage to do their best. But the crackheads and runaway dads are symptoms. There has been an almost cosmic shift from a working America to a strangely Las Vegasised country where the money shufflers (stockbrokers, merger maniacs) profit hugely from un- and under-employment.

The first thing a new Chief Executive Officer does on coming into office nowadays is to establish Stock Exchange credibility by firing half the workers. We are killing not only our own children but our prime market as well.

But some prosper. Hollywood and Las Vegas are the twin capitals of a new empire of joy, bursting at the seams with investment and rising employment. 1996 will be a bad year for kids but probably great for America-plex.

Clancy Sigal is a Hollywood screenwriter and journalist

Economy

Marian Bell

THE best hope, and most likely outturn for the UK economy is that 1996 will be a year which sees a resumption of modest, sustainable, non-inflationary growth, permitting a further fall in unemployment.

The November 1995 budget tax cuts, strong money supply growth and the further depreciation of the pound which occurred in 1995 should all support economic activity. So, too, should the proximity of the next election. That should ensure that economic policy is stimulative.

Although it is possible that the current slow-down will turn to recession, as could occur if firms react to excessive stocks by cutting back aggressively on orders and production, the Chancellor would be likely to respond by reducing interest rates, further protecting public sector spending and introducing a fiscally stimulative budget package next November.

Since it is unlikely that such policies would be well received by the foreign exchange markets, particularly if accompanied by still strong monetary growth and rising inflation, a weak pound would prime a further bout of activity. This means that there is another risk to the ideal, comfortable pictures of stronger but sustainable growth, other than recession — that of a too-buoyant economy as the year progresses. But the downside to this would not become apparent until after the year is out.

Marian Bell is a Treasury Economist at the Royal Bank of Scotland and a Guardian economic commentator

Smallweed

IN A profile of Michael Ancram, Tory MP for Devizes, in the fifth edition of Robert Waller's Almanac Of British Politics, his collaborator, Byron Criddle, writes: "Uncharacteristically stocky of build, given his patrician birth, he stands to left-of-centre of his party . . ." I dare say before John Major established the classless society it was possible that aristocrats were on average taller than most. But the idea that most grew up tall and willowy and looking like the young Ian Gilmour is more difficult to sustain.

In the hope of resolving this question, I sped off to the National Portrait Gallery, expecting to find the odd stocky aristocrat mingling with the willowy ones. But the expedition was not a success, since most of the subjects were painted sitting down, which makes their heights hard to judge. Worse, aristocratic sitters who one knows to have been unusually short are painted in ways which make them look taller. G F Watts's portrait of Lord John Russell, perhaps the tiniest of all British prime ministers, for example, wisely confines itself to the great man's head.

One obvious exception to Criddle's thesis is Winston Churchill, a descendant of Marlborough, but undeniably stocky and a shade below average height. The same was true of the Duke of Northumberland, who died recently. More research is obviously needed. One might also consider the claim which I saw the other day that people below average height have rarely won election to the US presidency. Just shows how wise Napoleon was to get himself born in France.

ADEUCEDLY civil letter from Kent asks for Smallweed's support for a nationwide campaign to halt the decline of Radio 3, and especially the standards of presentation. The writer, Ian Gordon, quotes the Guardian's radio critic, Anne Karpf, as complaining that we no longer get programmes, but "shows". Much of which I agree with, especially since over Christmas I heard a presenter refer to an item she'd played "at the top of the show".

Yet, asked to pass on the writer's address (which, by the way, is 16 Bayle Court, The Bayle, Folkestone CT20 1SN: and he'd like s.a.e.s), I find myself hesitating. Not because I'm a surreptitious addict of Paul Gambaccini, whom I find too breathily reverent, in the manner of the late Alan Dell (Your Hundred Best Tunes). No, what makes me think twice is a programme I heard while driving through Newington Butts, SE1, before Christmas, in which a presenter, too enthusiastic to be anyone other than David Owen Norris, was discussing with a practising mathematician the link between music and maths.

The conversation started with music by Bartók, which apparently demonstrates remarkable mathematical skills, even if the composer himself may have been unaware of it. It then moved on to a mathematician called Gauss, whom, as I recall, the studio guest described as perhaps the greatest mathematician who ever lived. The speakers between them alleged that one of his lasting achievements was a unit of measurement known as the *Gauss*, whose use nowadays was proscribed throughout the European Union, and even constituted a legal offence in France.

To my shame, I had never before heard of this remarkable man, born in 1777, the son of a bricklayer, who successively revolutionised thought in mathematics, astronomy, geodesy and electromagnetism. His influence can be traced in computer technology (through his method of Least Squares, developed around 1794), electric telegraphy and the Theory of Relativity. Your TV, I am told, even now *degausses* itself when you switch it on.

The *Gauss* is (or was) a unit of magnetic flux density, now superseded by the *tesla*, named after a US physicist born in Croatia: not because (Bill Cash please note) of some French-inspired Euro-plot, but because that is what international science agreed in adopting the SI standard (*Système Internationale*). On account of which illuminating exchanges, I shall not at this stage be joining the Gordon campaign. Instead, I wish Radio 3, along with all readers, a Happy New Year.

THE discovery that Jack is the top name for newborn boys — leaving John, of which Jack was once regarded as a derivative, 39th — has displeased the Daily Telegraph, which thinks it shows that parents lack inspiration. "The classless society," it said yesterday, "has its virtues, but it tends to leave us short of heroes and heroines. Come to think of it, 'Jack' sums it up well." Smallweed hadn't previously realised that we'd already arrived at the classless society which John Major pledged himself to create. But if so, it is hard to imagine a better hero than Jack. I commend to the Daily Telegraph the story of Jack And The Beanstalk (Ladybird Favourite Tales, 99p) — a parable of upward mobility to gladden the heart of Lord Tebbit.

Jack is born to a one-parent family whose worldly goods at the outset amount to one cow. Jack, however, shows an early interest in markets. He boldly takes the cow to one, where he swaps it for a packet of magic beans, which his mother, unversed in the works of Hayek, crossly throws out of the window. Next morning, though, there's a great big beanstalk outside which Jack niftily climbs, only to find himself in the power of a vast conglomerate, represented here by a giant. How Jack filches the giant's moneybags, contrives his death, and is never poor again (nor is his mother) is a tale that has inspired budding entrepreneurs in this country for centuries. Jack Major should make it part of the National Curriculum.

The Marquis of Vauxenargues is on holiday.

١٠٥٥ من الاصل

Islam

Akbar Ahmed

CHARACTERISTIC of our post-modern world, a contradictory pattern of violent conflict and, simultaneously, increased dialogue will mark Muslim societies. Muslims living as minorities — in the UK, in India — will continue to complain against what they see as increasingly xenophobic government policies. Kashmir will carry on bleeding.

Initiatives to improve understanding between Muslims and the West will continue. The Oxford lecture of the Prince of Wales sparked several: this month, Emma Nicholson launched the first of six major conferences.

In Muslim majority areas, clashes with government will result in more violence; those in the middle will be increasingly squeezed. From Cairo to Karachi, Muslim cities will remain battlegrounds. A surreal peace, tied inextricably to outside forces, is precariously balanced in Bosnia, the Middle East and large parts of Central Asia.

There are too many military dictators, authoritarian religious figures and corrupt demagogues in the Muslim world. A large percentage of Muslim society is young and disenchanted; many are unemployed. Violent confrontation may not be in the tolerant spirit of Islam but it engenders a red-hot sense of commitment. These Muslims are protesting against the injustices of their world. Islam is all they have to fall back on. They will be labelled "Islamic fundamentalists" and damned in the world media.

Professor Akbar Ahmed is a fellow of Selwyn College, Cambridge and author of Living Islam (BBC-Penguin Books)

Politics

Edward Heath

REALISM — that is what we British need to show above all in 1996. Realism in trade and industry, realism in our international relations and realism no where more so than in our domestic politics.

The public watching the proceedings in the House of Commons are appalled at the petty exchanges across the floor and the cheap debating points. Our constituents want a realistic public discussion of what affects them most, their health, their housing, their children's education and their overwhelming feeling of insecurity. It is stability they want, not constant change.

Realism now is vital for the future of the Conservative Party. Realism in its attitudes and the policies which flow from them. It is now blatantly obvious that we have lost widespread support. This is no mid-term slip. It is nearly four years since the last election. What, then, is the point in demanding more of the same medicine?

Realism in our international relations. All too often we are tied to dogma while other countries get away with the trade. We must realise that with all the technical developments in communications the modern world is a small world. Japan, the US, France and Germany have left us way behind in the so-called Far East.

In particular, realism in Europe. Let us stop kidding ourselves. Whether we like it or not, there is no effective place for Britain today outside the European Union. Then let us be positive and make a success of being inside it. Let us not deceive ourselves into thinking and claiming that we can make the Union do only what we want: and that the other member countries really want to do it our way. They don't. Every time we try it on we are defeated and humiliated. The Prime Minister must resume his original position "at the heart of Europe"; only then shall we regain influence and achieve the success we are seeking and deserve.

Sir Edward Heath is MP for Old Bexley & Sidcup

Religion

Peter Stanford

POPE John Paul's Christmas day wobble will doubtless ensure the continuation of speculation about his already much-proposed date with Saint Peter at the Pearly Gates. The old chap, 75 in May, has other ideas however. With his gaze fixed ever more firmly on the coming millennium celebrations, he is promising another uncompromising denunciation of what he sees as the vices of secularism and sex. Hopes of a new era of realism remain on hold, and the now only thinly veiled schism in world Catholicism between Rome and the rest grows more worrying.

Nearer home in 1996 will give a clue as to the future direction of English Catholicism — a continuation of the liberal, tolerant approach of Cardinal Hume or a change in flavour of the smells, bells and "eternal truths" so venerated by the traditionalist ranks that have lately been swollen by the wave of ex-Anglican converts. The appointment of a new archbishop of Liverpool to succeed the admirable Derek Worlock will reveal, in practice, the heir apparent to Cardinal Hume, who is due to retire in two years.

George Carey will be praying that next year might see the Church of England humbly back-out of the headlines and into the sacristy, but debates on the place of gay priests and on the suitability of women to be bishops look set to exacerbate divisions within Anglicanism. And in spite of Carey's endeavours, the saga of Lincoln Cathedral continues to rival Susan Howatch and Antony Trollope. Such turmoil in the mainstream churches does little to encourage an up-turn in attendances, with religion becoming even more marginal to our natinal life, and something to be done in the privacy of homes and heads rather than in houses of god.

Peter Stanford is a former editor of the Catholic Herald. He has written biographies of Lord Longford and Cardinal Hume. His biography of the Devil is published in April.

Labelled 'fundamentalists' and damned in the world media, Muslims face further injustices JOHN HILLELSON AGENCY

Northern Ireland

Ian Paisley jnr

IN HER Christmas message to the Nation the Queen alluded to our fascination for "commemorations and anniversaries". She described them as "part of the national heritage". It is true that we are absorbed by the significance of our past for the events of the present.

In scanning the events of 1995 we find Ulster in a post-Clinton mood. The President has come and gone; the tinsel, the festivities, once so splendid with colour, are now tatty and disfigured; the Disney-like magic, promised by his visit, has evaporated into the stark reality that Ulster is still in a conflict. Yes, less bloody than before but, nonetheless, a conflict. 1995 will be remembered as a year of shameless concesssions to the IRA — so many, it's impossible to list them in such a short piece.

What hopes does 1996 hold for us? What anniversaries should be set in place next year? Moving from the year without consent I hope we move to the year of consent by the people of Ulster.

The illusion of peace which the Government attempts to sustain with glossy adverts and illustrious but contradictory promises to contending sides will be shattered in the reality that peace can only come about when those capable of wrecking peace are thoroughly stripped of their illegal apparatus. Has the Government the fortitude to see to it, in 1996, that the destruction of the terrorists and the creation of a real, democratic peace is achieved?

Ian Paisley jr, DUP Justice Spokesman

Race

Linda Bellos

I FEAR that 1996 will be a year of further deaths of black people in police custody, prisons or at the hands of immigration officials. The stories of those deaths will go largely unreported unless there is some kind of disturbance at the inevitable demonstration.

Fear of black people and the increasing tendency to demonise us will continue, with greater prison sentences for black wrongdoers than for similar offences committed by white people.

As we approach the general election the Tory party will increasingly play the race card, seeking to criminalise and demonise black men and women. And the Labour party will keep quiet, fearing being seen as soft on immigrants and immigration.

With a major piece of legislation already in the parliamentary programme, the Government is attempting to make asylum and refuge even more difficult for the few thousand who apply each year, the Asylum and Immigration Bill will attempt to solve problems that do not currently exist. Michael Howard's intention is to whip up hysteria against the alien hordes when actually the numbers involved are minuscule.

The Labour party will counter by officially keeping its collective head down as though it can win the next election by appealing only to Daily Mail readers while ignoring the black and ethnic minority voters on whom at aleast 27 parliamentary seats depend. My own hope is that the majority of the electorate will show its traditional compassion, openess and generosity which have made many of us proud to identify with Britain.

Linda Bellos is a former Lambeth councillor

Asylum

David Burgess

NO GHOST of Christmas future is needed to predict the pivotal events of 1996 for migrants. Nevertheless, cometh the hour, cometh the Home Secretary from Hell. After the incantations about good race relations and firm immigration control, ministers concluded their balancing exercise by jumping on one end of the scales.

The Asylum and Immigration Bill promises a savaging of safeguards, new criminal offences and starvation. The children of asylum seekers, the old and the infirm will be amongst the many who will become homeless and penniless. The High Commissioner for Refugees' office has described the measures as arbitrary and severe. Feeding centres and squatter camps in the royal parks have been predicted.

To establish that this has nothing to do with playing the race card in good time for the next election, ministers have gone out of their way to clarify their reasoning. Asylum seekers are "bogus", "non-serious", "merely playing the system". So it's alright then. The devil can have the hindmost.

David Burgess specialises in immigration law

Scotland

Frank Kuppner

THE future does not exist, of course, and especially not in Scotland. Fortunately, however, we do have plenty of the past - and this seems to perform here broadly the same function that the future does elsewhere.

In 1996 there will very likely yet again be much talk, much excitement, much heated or anguished or elated envisioning of future social and political change. Then there will be much agonising as to whether liberty is a bargain at three pence in the pound. And then at the end of it all we shall doubtless have 1997. Or perhaps next year we shall again be consulted at the polls as to what it is we want. We shall say, as usual: Give us anything but more of the same. And the votes will be counted and very likely we will be told:"Thank you for letting us know your views on the matter. We'll come back to you in five years time or so. However, for the moment it has all been fairly and amicably settled. Here, Gentle Jock, is some more of the same."

And no doubt England will win by something like 10-0 at Wembley.

Frank Kuppner is a novelist and is McVitie's Scottish Writer of the Year.

The movers and shakers

Guardian foreign correspondents pick the people most likely to be stars on the world stage next year

ADMIRAL LEIGHTON SMITH or "Snuffy" will be the most powerful man in Bosnia. An American, and commander of the Implementation Force (I-for), his nickname derives from a hillbilly cartoon character Snuffy Smith, appropriate for the son of an Alabama pig-farmer. He camouflages the awesome firepower at his disposal beneath a folksy charm. He conducted the Nato air-strike campaign this year and still maintains he is prepared to use force ("blow the whole damn thing up") if either side tries to shove a spanner in the Dayton machinery. 1996 will show whether he is as prepared to bomb when he is chin-deep in the Balkan morass as he was from his office in Naples, or whether he is prepared to get as tough with the Bosnian government if it refuses to toe the line. JULIAN BORGER in Sarajevo

PIETRO AGLIERI, head of the Santa Maria del Gesu group of Sicilian Mafia "families", officially he has been on the run since 1989. In his late thirties, he is best placed to fill the vacuum left by the arrests of two of the Corleone clan's leaders. Said to be hugely rich and to have good relations with the Colombian drug cartels.

ANTONIO GUTERRES, Portugal's new Socialist Prime Minister, 46, elected to lead a minority administration last October, has all to prove: that he was the right man for the job, and that his distinctly Blairite brand of ultra-moderate socialism can work. An enthusiastic supporter of European integration.

JOHN HOOPER, Southern Europe Correspondent

JUERGEN RUTTGERS has the happy job title of Minister for the Future, and is building a reputation as a competent and well-connected performer and a potential chancellor-to-be should Helmut Kohl stand down at the next election in 1998. A Cologne Catholic and laywer, aged 44, Ruttgers' brief covers the increasingly key areas of science, technology, education and training.

MICHAEL STEINER, a career diplomat with the German foreign office, has just plucked the reward for years of exhausting engagement in Balkan mediation, with the appointment at 45 as the key assistant to Carl Bildt in overseeing the democratic reconstruction of Bosnia. Steiner was at the Prague embassy in 1989 handling the influx of disenchanted east Germans that led to the fall of the Berlin wall.

IAN TRAYNOR in Bonn

BERNARD THIBAULT is the man who will decide whether France plunges into a new, crippling rail strike in January. The 35-year-old communist railway union leader whose *jeune premièr* looks helped ensure popular sympathy for a modern and articulate workers' movement made up of 169,000 protesting SNCF staff. He is in the front line to take over the multi-union communist-led Confédération Générale du Travail (CGT), France's most powerful all-sector workers' federation.

SOPHIE MARCEAU, 29, actress and film star, publishes her first novel in the new year. First reactions to Menteuse (Liar) suggest that her adventures of a thoroughly modern miss could make her the next princess of French literature.

PAUL WEBSTER in Paris

YOSSI BEILIN, 47, is the rising star of the thinking Israeli left. He has been at the heart of national decision-making since 1984, as cabinet secretary, director of foreign ministry, and now effectively deputy premier. Will take much credit, and blame, for any peace deal with Syria.

DAVID LEVY, the former abrasive foreign minister in the rightwing Likud government. Since the 1992 election, he had led his own populist party, which could seriously damage Likud's electoral health in 1996 national polls.

DEREK BROWN in Jerusalem

JAVIER SOLANA, the former Spanish socialist foreign minister, has just taken up his post as Secretary General of Nato at a crucial time for the organisation as it polices the peace in Bosnia. Rocked by the Willy Claes affair, the alliance is looking to Solana to pull the organisation together. Well known for his geniality, good humour and approachability — not traits always seen at Nato.

ALEXANDRE LAMFALUSSY, 66, is the ecu man. If Europe is to get a single currency by 1999, this Belgian banker of Hungarian origin is the man most likely to make it work. He is head of the European Monetary Institute — the putative central bank — and author of the blueprint on how to achieve monetary union.

STEPHEN BATES in Brussels

EDUARD ROSSEL is the man of the moment. After a general election which showed a political gulf opening up between Moscow and the rest of Russia, the regions will be worth watching in 1996. Rossel, 58, trounced the government's candidate to become governor of Yekaterinburg Region, in the Urals, challenging Moscow from the desk where Boris Yeltsin used to work.

SERGEI LISOVSKI will be the key image-maker. Founder of Russia's first discotheque, and now head of its leading advertising agency, this self-made man has ambitions to start his own TV channel. He has kept his hands out of politics and is therefore still trusted.

DAVID HEARST in Moscow

QIN SHI HUANG DI, alias first Emperor of China. Dead since 210BC and maligned since by Confucian and Maoist mandarins. Set for major comeback thanks to two new films involving some of biggest names in Chinese cinema.

TUNG CHEE-HUA, a Hong Kong shipping magnate who fled mainland China in 1949 to escape the Communist Party. He is expected to take over after Governor Chris Patten as plenipotentiary for Hong Kong's new overlord.

ANDREW HIGGINS in Hong Kong

Happy families stir up mixed feelings about home work

Sara Maitland

THERE is a certain element of chaos in this house this morning. This is partly because, as you are no doubt well aware, Scotland is having a spell of freak cold weather — so one of the baths won't drain and a neighbour arrives with cans for water since her own supply is frozen. It is also partly because my sister practices an extreme version of Scottish hospitality — there are 11 people staying in the house, two of whom have the flu, and there were 32 people to lunch yesterday.

But this is going to be an article about neither Scottish stoicism in the face of the elements nor a Scottish family New Year. The underlying reason for the chaos is the nature of middle-class employment trends. No one, except for a student who has a part-time barman's job, is going out to work, but most of the adults are at work — look at me. This undeniably puts pressure on the phone system, on the word processor and related facilities, on time, space and tempers.

I am one of six children, all born between 1948 and 1960. We were all brought up in considerable comfort and were very thoroughly educated. Between us we have four university degrees and at least four professional qualifications. We all have children (18 of them between us at the last count): we are all home owners, car owners, have stable middle-class lifestyles. On the other hand, we live all over the country and represent a wide range of political opinion — our parliamentary heroes, for example, are scattered across a spectrum from Ken Livingstone to Teddy Taylor. Despite this, we all get on well enough to brave the snow and ice and visit each other over Christmas and the New Year.

The point here is that we are all self-employed, and all working from home. Apart from one brother who is a dairy farmer, the rest of us are "multi-jobbed", service providers not producers, knitting it together as we go. This is also, interestingly enough, true of the in-law: when the vicar quits, as he plans to do next year, there will be no professionals and no one in salaried or waged employment in the extended family, either. We do rather different things — write novels and columns for newspapers at one end, and run a bed and breakfast establishment at the other, with consultancies, multi-level marketing and such like in between, but our job structures are surprisingly similar. We are also accumulating a good deal of experience of self-employment — more than 35 years between us.

This may be an extreme instance, and we might want to ask if there is something about us — we're too obstinate, for example, or too arrogant to work for anyone else. But all figures — for example, in the Scotsman this week — suggest that this is a continuing trend. An increasing number of the middle classes are adopting the employment pattern that so alarmed the Victorians about the lumpen proletariat: the east London poor, for instance, who so disturbed Mayhew in the 1890s because they were jacks of all trades, willing to turn their hand on a daily basis to whatever was going. The dockers' unions fought valiantly to rescue their members from this nightmare of hanging about looking for a day's work. Casual workers delivering services as and when they could pick up work was a Victorian Value that everyone found worrying: the left because of the chronic insecurity, and the right because of the chronic instability of such workers. Now it is seen as the way forward, the inevitable consequence of the electronic communications revolution and a good deal for employers. Tenure, both at the professional level and at the skilled manual level, is a vanishing concept. More and more jobs are contracted out to freelance workers, who bid for individual and short-term contracts.

There are lots of benefits to this system. We all like it and, in a long discussion, we thought of some of the reasons why. The central one was about control of one's own time, an extended range of choice — the ability to knock off if one chooses and prepare lunch for 32 people, for instance. It is nice to stay at home, start at hours of one's own choosing, feel that however hard it is to grovel for the individual job, the trade-off is being the boss once you have got it. There were marked disadvantages, too: our major collective concern was about old age and our pensions (levels of efficiency in making provision varied markedly; awareness of the problem, however, was very high).

> Increasing numbers are adopting the employment pattern that so alarmed the Victorians about the lumpen proletariat

But the biggest disadvantage was that this model of employment raises social questions we do not think are being sufficiently addressed. The most positive of these is the relationship of men and their children: if Daddy is not going out to the office at crack of dawn and returning at dead of night, if Daddy indeed sees one of the principal advantages of the way he works as being that he can manage his own time, then obviously he is around to be a father. I have to say that I think all my brothers are excellent hands-on Daddies, especially given that none of them think they are doing this from any New Man ideology, but because they like their children and enjoy having more access to them than many of their friends do. Nonetheless, it still requires thought — balancing the needs and interests of small people against the needs to get the job done and the bacon brought home does create tensions. You can choose your hours, but in another sense you are never not at work.

And the advantages to men may still be proving to be disadvantages to women. For some women, working from home means they can be full-time mothers and also work — although it seems to me that if you are doing two full-time things then you do not have much time left for leisure and pleasure. On the other hand, once the choice to work outside the home has been made, there it is — it does not have to be balanced minute by minute against the desires of the child who wants to play/talk/wee NOW. But we need to remember that the determination to find access to work outside the home was the impetus that drove the 19th century women's movement and remains an underlying concern of the 20th century version. Home-based piece work — sweat shops in isolation — were a major source of women's poverty, and women (particularly Asian women) are still trapped within them. We women with choices should look very carefully at the experiences of women who have not chosen home work before we embrace it with wild enthusiasm.

The trend towards working self-employed from home will inevitably continue. I could never, now, after my experience, happily go back to clocking on for someone else. But, like so many other things, we have to look carefully at the social implications of a so-called economic necessity. Passivity here is not in my interest.

Lowdown on hi-tech future

WILL HUTTON (Commentary, December 28) underestimates the impact that "telecommuting" is likely to have if it continues to expand as one of the basic forms of workplace organisation. The separation of domestic space from work space is central to most people's experience of modern life.

Our experience of the world around us is fundamentally affected by the distinctive separation between work and leisure, which partly derives from the spatial separation. It determines the rhythm of daily life and who we meet — how many people live with/marry someone they meet through work?

The structure of our cities and our transport patterns are determined in large measure by it. We experience our homes (negative equity and heating bills permitting) as refuges from the "harsh outside world" of work because domestic space is so separate from it.

Traditional forms of femininity and their distinction from masculinity derive in part from the association of femininity with domestic space and the association of masculinity with the space of work.

No doubt telecommuting won't change all of this and all at once, but its potential long term impact on these basic elements of our culture should not be underestimated.

Jerry Palmer.
Professor of Communications,
London Guildhall University,
Old Castle Street,
London E1 7NT.

WILL HUTTON must have had a good Christmas. "Consider how silly those 60s futurologists' predictions now look", he writes. Predictions that there would be a haemorrhage of manual work opportunities, that information technology would start to devastate white-collar employment, and that to calculate the size of British dole queues, the starting calculation would be to multiply the 1960 level by 10 and then add a couple of million.

The belief that we "live in an era of remarkable technological stability" is one mainly shared by those encamped in the top bunk of the 40/30/30 society.

I Morgan.
26 May Crescent,
Lincoln LN1 1LP.

THE slowing down of the technological transformation may in addition be attributed to the recent emphasis on marketing rather than on production.

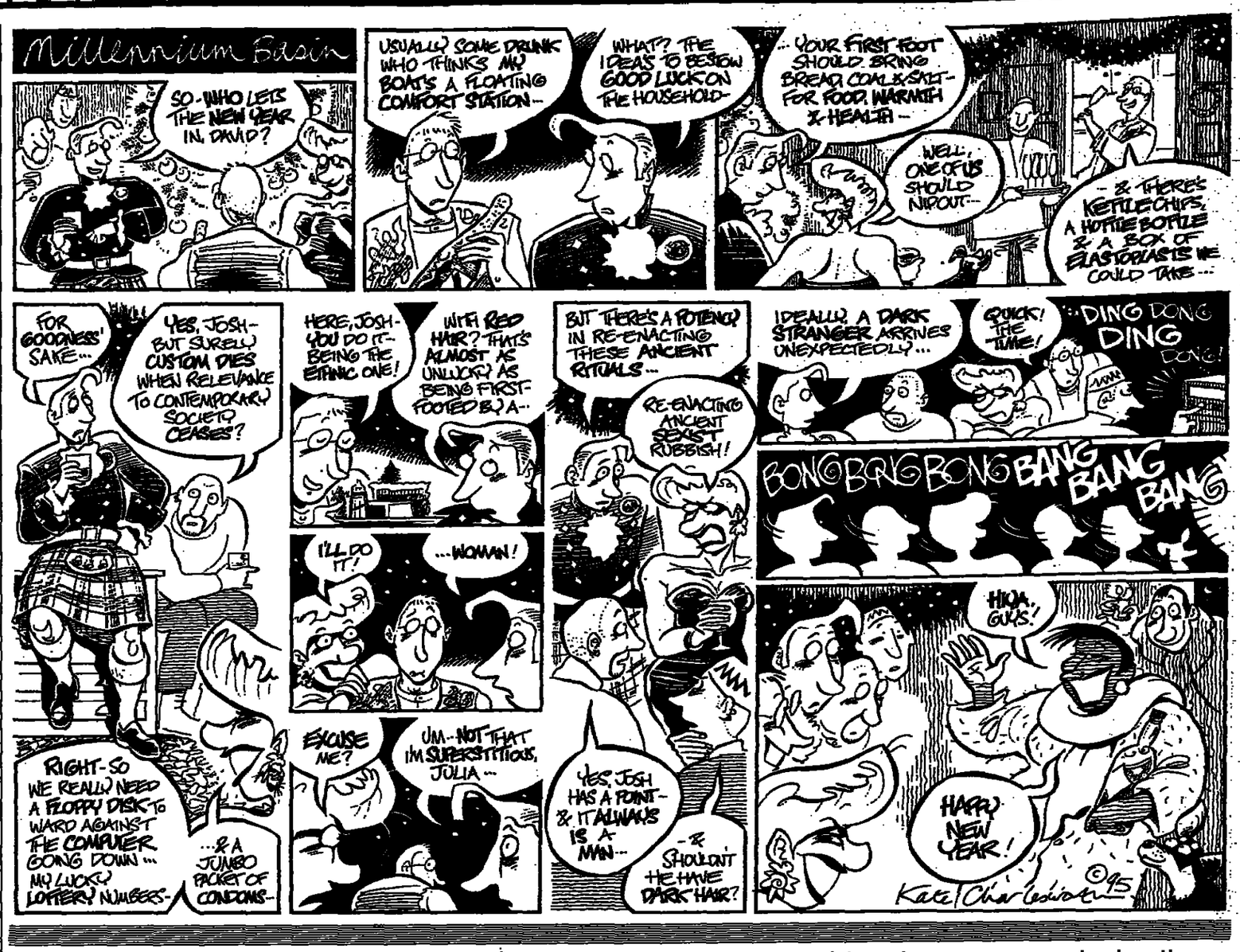
Without fundamentally new technology, the marketeers can ring the changes in their wares. Aided by the intense use of advertising and sales promotion, they can change the forms, prices, presentation, provide gifts or special offers and so on to satisfy the consumer's need for the new.

A shift in power and structure in the economy means that such retailers no longer sell what the supplier decides to produce but dictate what should be manufactured. This is risk-free and highly profitable for the major retailer. But the supplier has no incentive to introduce radically innovative products.

In the long term this is bad for the economy, for jobs, for production and for the survival of thousands of small retailers and suppliers of goods and services.

The marketeers have been helped at every stage by a friendly Government, which has done little to encourage the development or even the retention of high technology industries while universities have not had the resources for the research needed for profound technological changes.

J Ball.
9 Broadlands Close,
London N6 4AF.



Hostilities break out over Ulster

THANK YOU, Hugo Young, for your wonderfully blinkered summation of the Irish Problem (Commentary, December 27). You lump Bosnia, the Middle East and Ireland together and bemoan the inability of the latter to emulate the former two and grasp peace.

You conveniently overlook the leadership role played by the United States in convincing the Serbs, Croats, Bosnians, Arabs and Jews to compromise for gains of peace (if only Britain would allow the Americans the same leverage in the North of Ireland).

Mr Young is bored and annoyed at the inability of both the Unionists and Nationalists to understand that their grievances have been addressed and that there is little or nothing to stop peace and goodwill from breaking out. One wonders why there was a need for a Downing Street Declaration at all.

John Major, apparently, is the only player deserving of any credit. His description of Major as the peacemaking "vanguard" ignores completely the stalwart work of the other John from Derry who, on the one hand, convinced Adams and Co that a ceasefire would lead to talks and, on the other hand, pressed both Prime Ministers to declare the parameters for those talks.

The groundwork done, Adams and Co were promised talks within three months of an IRA ceasefire. Almost immediately, the process began to stumble. A series of preconditions were demanded by Major's Government. Firstly, there was the insistence on the IRA declaring an indefinite ceasefire. This demand receded into the background to be replaced by a more permanent sticking point . . . the handing over of arms.

Giving the Prime Minister plaudits for his obstructionism is not the way to achieve a permanent and lasting peace in the North of Ireland. The British Government, whether it likes it or not, has a duty and a responsibility to act positively for the cause of peace.

J Joseph Hogan.
Courtenay Rd,
Waterloo,
Liverpool L22.

IT WAS ironic that Hugo Young's article appeared on the same day as the Death on the Rock pay-out was reported. While Young praised the "admirable achievements" of John Major "the peacemaker", the British Government paid out £40,000 in legal costs to the relatives of SAS shoot-to-kill victims.

This was by no means an isolated incident as the suppressed reports of Stalker, Sampson and Stevens would demonstrate. Young also failed to mention the links between the British forces and loyalist death squads, or the security forces' continued use of plastic bullets on the streets of Northern Ireland.

It is laughable to suggest that the British Government can play the role of an honest broker. The conflict in Northern Ireland is indeed complex. Compromises are required on all sides and it has to be recognised that this includes the British Government.

Craig Smallbone.
Limerick Gardens,
Upminster,
Essex RM14.

HUGO YOUNG confuses the real issues by referring to religious overtones on both sides of the divide and argues that it is not about great issues. The present conflict is but a continuation of the colonial war that supposedly ended with the Treaty of 1922.

It was understood then that it was only a matter of time before the remaining six counties would finally be joined with the rest of the Irish mainland. That this did not happen has been a source of contention with the nationalists living in the six counties ever since and a threat to Protestants. It is futile to believe that peace can ever be maintained while the north is governed by a separate administration within the six counties or from the British mainland.

The present inquiry on decommissioning arms will serve no practical purpose if that is its only concern. It will be seen as a ploy to stave off a lasting peace settlement.

The history of the armed struggle to shake off British rule in Ireland has proved that force in the absence of negotiations becomes the only alternative.

This is not an acceptable option.

R D Fitt.
Woody Bay Cottages,
Cliff Path,
St Lawrence,
Ventnor,
Isle of Wight
PO38.

Ideas in currency: spinning the Web and selling out the dollar

JOHN SIMPSON (To coin a phrase, December 27) provides an interesting comparison between the committee choice to name the new European currency unit the euro and the vocabulary of the Internet. Just as the English language is not the result of a committee, neither were the Internet nor the World Wide Web and that has been one of the most important factors in their success.

The manner in which the language and usage of the Web have developed have surprised all of us who were involved. When Tim Berners-Lee created the first Web server at CERN, he saw it as an information service and so named it info.cern.ch. Within a short while, however, the convention that an official Web server should have the prefix www was firmly established.

The single most striking aspect of the Web is that it has no form of central authority, registration or control. In the same manner the ultimate authority on the English language is those who use it to communicate.

(Dr) Phillip Hallam-Baker.
Lawnswood,
Chester,
Cheshire CH4 8AR.

WHY go to the trouble of creating the euro when we already have and use a single currency, the US dollar, which is not merely European but worldwide?

For the past hundred years and more, the dollar has been the most stable of the major currencies. It is used for international trading in many commodities and is always the unit for international comparisons and calculations. It is accepted in local commerce to some extent everywhere, and substitutes for local currencies wherever they are too weak to be trusted. If European states removed existing artificial restraints, it would start to permeate their economies just as, according to Mr Keegan, the euro would, but sooner. It is a good, sound, round wheel; why reinvent it?

During the adjustments as the dollar replaced the national currencies, some American foreign exchange dealers would become richer and some European ones poorer. Would that be too high a price for, eventually, a world with no foreign exchange dealers at all?

F P McCabe.
49 Malmains Drive,
Frenchay,
Bristol BS16 1PJ.

Broadcast on the World Service

YOUR leader (December 29) about the World Service was both misleading and repeated certain errors which have appeared in the press before. The facts are as follows:

- The outcome of the current spending round was a reduction of 7 per cent in cash terms over each of the next three years for the Foreign Office diplomatic wing. The World Service and other bodies such as the British Council have to be funded out of this reduced provision. The Foreign and Commonwealth Office's total capital allocation was cut by £50 million;
- Cuts to the Foreign Office budget are much bigger both absolutely and proportionately than those to the BBC World Service;
- We went to considerable lengths to reduce the pressure on the World Service, which we value highly, but which cannot be exempt from some cuts. We have softened the impact on World Service capital programmes — if we had inflicted the same percentage cuts on the World Service as on the FCO, the reduction on the capital side would have been much greater;
- Less than £13 million (not £130 million as you state) of the FCO's budget is spent on entertainment. This is shared among 183 countries with which we have diplomatic or consular relations.
- Diplomatic work is not about luxurious living. It is about getting the best for Britain in a sharply competitive world.

Rt Hon Jeremy Hanley MP.
Minister of State,
Foreign and Commonwealth Office,
London SW1A 2AH.

NI New Internationalist magazine

Di doesn't get it

SO SHE DOESN'T UNDERSTAND how the "enemy" that ignores her needs also ignores the needs of millions around the world who don't have the basic necessities that she takes for granted. That their poverty, hunger, unemployment and homelessness require real solutions; not a princess and a pack of Sun reporters. Don't be like Di – get the NI.

Each month we tackle one subject in depth. It could be AIDS or the Arms Trade, Human Rights or Hunger. NI magazine is quicker to read than a book, right up-to-the-minute – and a one year subscription is just £24.85. But you don't have to take our word for it! Just fill in the box below and we will send you three months' issues FREE, plus a full-colour world map (59x84cm). All yours to keep whether or not you subscribe.

3 FREE ISSUES Plus Map

Post to: New Internationalist, FREEPOST SG599, PO Box 79, Hertford SG14 1YB

Or order direct (9am-5pm, Monday to Friday) on FREEPHONE 0800 920199 (Delta, Mastercard and Visa accepted – Please quote code 7G1GG)

NO-RISK TRIAL SUBSCRIPTION

YES please send me my 3 free issues and free map. If I decide to cancel, I will write and tell you within 10 days of receiving my third issue. If I wish to continue, I need do nothing. Starting from the 1st of the following month, you will charge my account annually, until cancelled, the NI subscription price (now £24.85).

DIRECT DEBIT INSTRUCTION – To my bank or building society: I instruct you to pay direct debits at the request of NI. Amounts are variable and may be debited on various dates. But NI may only change them after giving me prior notice. I will tell the bank in writing if I wish to cancel this instruction. If any direct debit is paid which breaks the terms of this instruction the bank will refund me.

Name (BLOCK LETTERS please) | Bank/Building Society Account in the name of
Address | Bank Address
Postcode | Postcode
Signed | Account Number
Date | Sort code

Originator's No 994462. New Internationalist Publications Ltd. Reg in England No 1655239. Reg Office: 55 Rectory Road, Oxford, UK. Offer applies only to direct debiters in the UK.

7G2GG

Bad debts

THE case for multilateral debt reduction by the World Bank and the IMF is beyond serious dispute (Alex Brummer's Notebook, December 23). About half of the $13bn in debt servicing repaid by the world's 32 poorest countries each year goes to multilateral creditors. In countries such as Uganda, where one in five children dies before the age of five, the Government spends three times as much repaying multilateral creditors as it does on the health of its citizens. Meanwhile, external debt is acknowledged by the World Bank as one of the major obstacles to economic recovery.

Why, then, are the Bretton Woods agencies not championing multilateral debt relief? According to the IMF and some senior figures in the World Bank, it will undermine the credibility of the Bank in financial markets, raising the costs of borrowing. Second, because there is "no free lunch" in debt relief as the costs will have to be met by drawing upon development assistance budgets.

Such arguments conveniently ignore the fact that repayments to multilateral agencies are already being sustained by a massive diversion of aid: around $6bn of development assistance has been used for this purpose in the 1990s. Using increasingly scarce aid resources on this scale to refinance debt, rather than alleviate poverty, is indefensible.

So, too, is the claim that multilateral debt reduction will damage their market standing. The debt owed to the IMF and the World Bank by the world's poorest countries represents less than 5 per cent of the total. It could be reduced through prudent use of the World Bank's reserves, and by utilising funds from the sale of IMF gold stocks, without adverse market reactions.

Kevin Watkins.
Senior Policy Advisor,
Oxfam, 274 Banbury Road,
Oxford OX2 7DZ.

Another British invention

YOUR leader (December 28) contained a number of startling claims. The chief one was that ". . . over 40 per cent of major discoveries during the past 50 years came from the UK".

The original survey on which this claim is based (by Gellman Research Associates in 1976) found that 55 per cent of the innovations made by Britain in the period 1953-73 (yes, this is historic data) were of the "radical breakthrough" type, with 40 per cent being classified as representing a "major technological shift" and 4 per cent "an improvement". Sloppy reporting contrived to transform a fairly interesting research finding about the composition of UK innovations into a "fact" about Britain's comparative international performance.

You go on to pin the blame for the lack of exploitation on the City. One suspects that the UK financial system has refused to back its fair share of new mouse traps. But I think we also have to look at our failings in production — that is, production of high quality, defect-free, price-competitive products — and our almost total aversion to taking on other traders in truly competitive markets, if we are to begin to understand our weaknesses in transforming inventions into world-beating products.

Grahame Walshe.
122 Preston Road,
Middlesex HA9 8NJ.

Party tricks

IF YOUR report of Peter Mandelson's proposals (Trust me, I'm not a doctor, December 21) is true — and I only fear too much that it is — it would appear clear that he is bent on ensuring a fifth Conservative victory under its alternative name "New Labour", and completing Mrs Thatcher's life work of ending socialism in Britain for good.

Quite obviously he has not done the proper thing by crossing the floor of the House because he knows the Conservative Party is going to lose the next election. Better by far to subvert the winners-in-waiting.

What hope is there for anyone who still does not believe in greed and sleeze, in power for power's sake? What possible scenario is there after a Mandelson-led "victory"? Only his advocacy of a Lib Dem-New Lab pact gives us a possible glimpse of political realignment.

The Lib Dem price of such a pact would be proportional representation and this would lead realistically to a Portillo-led Fascist Party, a Clarke-led Mod Con indistinguishable from a Blair-Mandelson New Lab, with Ashdown's Lib Dems a last breath of the centre left and leaving Scargill's New Socs as the only bastion of socialism left.

Martin Lewis.
Sideways Cottage,
Woolverstone,
Ipswich,
IP9 1AX.

Counsel from the councils

LORD Weatherill (House of Lords, December 29) is quite right to point out that properly considered constitutional reform must include evaluation of the role of local authorities.

For far too long local government has been treated as some kind of constitutional after-thought. Its functions have been turned on or off (mainly off) at the whim of central government. Its financial base has been eroded in the interests of national taxation policy with no thought given to the implications for local accountability. And authorities individually are regarded as easy knocking copy for national politicians.

The start of a new year is an excellent opportunity for those who advocate a "renaissance" of local government to begin to put action to the rhetoric.

Let there be, for example, no more foolish talk about removing all schools from local democratic responsibility, but instead the re-creation of the historic role of local authorities, working in partnership with national government, in meeting the educational and other needs of local communities.

Robin Wendt.
Secretary,
Association of County Councils,
Eaton House,
66a Eaton Square,
London SW1W 9BH.

New syllabus

TEACHERS were left off the list of "leading charities and pressure groups" whose hopes for 1996 you carried in your Society section (Bring in the new, December 29). May I — as a lay officer of a teachers' organisation — suggest the following?

- Government: Dismiss Chris Woodhead and appoint a truly independent head of Ofsted.
- Opposition: Admit that kidglove Tory education policies, aimed at floating voters among the chattering classes will do nothing for the many thousands of children in under-resourced inner-city schools.
- An acknowledgment that there is no empirical evidence that the National Curriculum is raising standards and may actually be having an adverse effect on those at the lower end of the ability range by forcing them through inappropriate hoops.

L A Summers.
22 Ribston Gardens,
Paddock Wood,
Kent TN12 6BA.

Up in smoke

IT WAS gratifying to read (Ban on smoking to be enforced, December 23) that the designation of non-smoking areas in public places is to become statutory.

Certainly here in Tunbridge Wells, the voluntary provision of non-smoking areas in restaurants has been a failure. There is no proper restaurant in this town in which one can dine at night and not be subject to tobacco smoke.

As an Anglo-American couple who divide their time between the new and old worlds, we are perhaps more dismayed by this obduracy than those not accustomed to the pleasures of smoke-free dining. We look forward to, perhaps in the near future, being able to enjoy dining out in Tunbridge Wells. We are accustomed to dining out several nights a week; but have not been to a restaurant here for dinner for years.

James Munves.
Sandhurst Park,
Tunbridge Wells,
Kent TN2 3SU.

Letters to the Editor may be faxed on 0171 837 4630 or sent by post to 119 Farringdon Road, London EC1R 3ER, and by e-mail to letters@guardian.co.uk. Please include a full postal address and daytime telephone number, even in e-mailed letters. We regret we cannot acknowledge receipt of letters. We may edit them for clarity and concision.

A Country Diary

MACHYNLLETH: One of the earliest Welsh ornithological observations I am aware of was made in the year 1188 while Gerald the Welshman and others were making their famous horse ride round Wales. As they got near Bangor, someone in the entourage happened to remark that he had just heard a golden oriole, whereupon someone else made the unkind comment that it was probably only a green woodpecker. It is curios that Gerald thought this incident worthy of report but it shows how conscious people were of birds eight centuries ago. Bird-watching has come a long way since then and we now have books that will tell us not only how to identify our orioles and green woodpeckers but even to help us decide which race they may belong to, which is information we might need in some parts of Europe or Asia. I was reminded of the close scrutiny to which our birds are all now subjected when I got in the post last week the latest number of Welsh Birds, a journal now well established as an excellent source of information and published twice-yearly in June and December. What the current number is mainly about is a meticulous summary of all the bird records and ringing activities in 1994, and for some species these are given in astonishing detail, a measure of the devotion of a whole army of observers who went out spotting and counting birds from January to December. Some of them were lucky enough to meet with such super rarities as yellow billed cuckoo, Sardinian warbler and Forster's tern. So here you are, a whole pulsating year of Welsh bird watching, published by the Welsh Ornithological Society. I am quite sure Gerald the Welshman would have given much to see such a wonderful document. But you can have it by sending a mere £4.50 (including p&p) to the editor, Michael Shrubbs, Hillcrest, Llanwrtyd Wells, Powys, LD5 4TL.

WILLIAM CONDRY

Jack's the lads' name

JACK SHAMASH laments his calling

THE most popular boy's name in 1995 was Jack. I just hope these parents know what they're letting their children in for — it's not easy being a Jack. At school, my name was associated with the heroes of fairy stories, where Jacks are the kind of idiots who sell the family cow for a handful of beans.

In between being lazy and stupid, Jacks may kill a few giants. But they are fundamentally sluggish, rather than dynamic, characters. This impression is also associated with idiotic rhymes and jingles: *Jack Spratt, Jack Frost*, Jack jump over the candlestick. Not only stupid, but dull: we *all know that* "all work and no play makes Jack a dull boy". If only there had been stories about brilliant, quick-witted Jacks.

Nor was this jaundiced stereotype helped by my teachers. One of the thickest teachers I ever knew *used to call me* Jackass. As I sat next to the door, another used to get me to answer it by calling, "Jack — door".

A series of popular songs — Jumping Jack Flash and Grocer Jack — exacerbated the problem. *Happy Jack*, by The Who, was probably the best, testifying as it did to the indomitable spirit of Jacks everywhere — "And they could not prevent Jack from being happy." The Jack in this song may have been a cheerful soul, but he was *no Einstein*.

The one which other children used to sing to me — not because they were taunting me, but because they found it amusing — was the Mannfred Mann song, My Name Is Jack, which told the tale of another *jolly simpleton*.

It never ceases to amaze me how many banal witticisms people can make about my name. "Hi Jack — take me to Cuba" (geddit?). I am 36 and I am still plagued by people who think they are being amusing, *sparkling and original by making* this crack. When I ask people how they are, it is quite common for people to answer "I'm all right Jack", then go into spasms of laughter. I assure you that, after the third time, this joke gets less funny.

When I lived in Australia, otherwise sensible children would crease themselves *laughing at a rhyme which involved* assaulting me at the end of every line. "Hello Jack, How's your back?" (I would get a great slap on the back); "I haven't seen you for ears and ears" (my ears would be twisted); "But I still nose you" (a hefty pinch on the nose).

Often when I walked into a pub, someone would declare; "Eeh, Jack you're late" (as in "ejaculate"). As far as Jack jokes go, this is the height of subtlety. While we're on the subject of sexual matters, I should point out that I had only to pass the time of day with a girl to be informed that I was Jack the Lad.

I have to report that things are getting better. Much of the credit for this must be handed to Jack Nicholson. A bit on the paunchy side he may be, but he is dynamic, a great actor and, above all, sexy. On behalf of Jacks everywhere, I would like to extend my heartfelt thanks to him.

I realised that Jack was becoming a more popular name because of a song I heard at a disco some years ago. After years of smiling, imbecilic Jacks, we were at last able to hold our heads up high on the dancefloor. The lyrics of this hit by the Reynolds Girls ran: "I'd rather Jack than Fleetwood Mac." I would like to say *that this is a sentiment* I wholeheartedly endorse.

Full rev to the final straight

Murray Walker may soon be hanging up his microphone but ADAM SWEETING meets a man who is not down in the pits. Photograph by TOM JENKINS

NO commentator has become as synonymous with his chosen sport as Murray Walker has with motor racing, at any rate since the demise of Dan Maskell and John Arlott. He seemed ordained for the job. He was born into the motor-sporting life, since his father Graham was a prewar motorcycle champion who later *became a BBC commentator*.

Lady Luck also gave Murray a race-day voice of such piercing, demented urgency that it could even make itself heard over the noise of a Formula 1 starting grid.

Ensconced in his house in the middle of a 13-acre estate on the edge of the New Forest, with deer and horses chomping through the *undergrowth* and a trout-stream tinkling past the bottom of the garden, Walker potters about among his trophies and mementoes, methodically attending to business as usual. The shelves are packed with books, videos and bound magazines covering all aspects of motor sport. Walker proudly gestures *towards a painting* he commissioned of the great Tazio Nuvolari driving his pre-war Auto Union; *there's a photo*graph of his father in his BBC years, and a drawing of him in action on his motorbike.

Yet beyond the quiet boundaries of Walker Mansions, speculation rages about Murray's future. The announcement that ITV have snatched the rights to broadcast For*mula 1 from under the nose of* the BBC, for a rumoured £60 million, was as much a shock to Walker as to everybody *else* — even to the BBC's head of sport, Jonathan Martin. He was informed of them in a phone call from Bernie Ecclestone — the fixer-in-chief of Formula 1, who masterminded the deal — only half an hour *before the new arrangements* were made public.

Like the BBC's contract to cover Formula 1, Walker's freelance arrangement with the Corporation expires along with the Beeb's F1 coverage at the start of the 1997 season. He has no idea whether ITV will offer him a job. At 72, Murray cheerfully faces the fact that *his days of bellowing micro*phones into submission are numbered whatever happens, *but the clandestine deal has* offended his sense of fair play.

"The very, very sad thing about it is that the BBC haven't lost any of the things they have lost — football, cricket, boxing, golf — because of criticism of their competence or enthusiasm," he begins, in a voice which can only be described as perfectly normal. "They have *lost them* because they have been massively outbid by either Sky or ITV. Sky can put up their subscriptions at will. ITV can presumably recoup the money they're putting out for Formula 1 by putting up the rates for commercials. The BBC is limited to licence fees, and the *moment anybody even talks* about putting up the licence fee there is a national outcry."

Murray hesitates to use one adjective when a cluster of them springs to mind, and he launches a salvo on behalf of the Beeb. "The BBC is literally bleeding to death in the sports area. My heart goes out to them because they're *extremely decent, extremely* hard-working, massively capable, enormously experienced people to whom sport matters. They're fighting with both hands tied behind their back because they haven't got the money, and nobody's got the guts to see that they get it. And I don't know how much the public actually cares. *That's the sad thing.*"

Walker is no sentimentalist. He accepts the free-market *logic that has driven Formula* 1 and ITV together for a fee 10 times what the BBC were paying, though he doesn't wish to antagonise the powerful Ecclestone.

"Bernie Ecclestone has been responsible for turning Formula 1 from what was essentially a sport for wealthy amateurs into what is now a *mega-mega-mega* worldwide business, generating billions of dollars and gigantic *sponsorship involvement*. Being the astute, far-seeing chap that he is, Bernie presumably saw that tobacco sponsorship would disappear *in the fullness of time*, thanks to worldwide ethical pressure. You can be bitter and twisted and talk about loyalty and all the rest of it, but money talks, and you can hardly blame Ecclestone and the sport for taking such a massive offer."

Similarly, Murray refuses to indulge in lachrymose reveries of past golden ages of *motor-racing. He remembers* seeing the Auto Unions and Mercedes-Benzes in action *before the war, but recalls* that they were so superior to the competition that there was very little excitement in the racing. Nor will he accept that the heroic era of Graham Hill and Jim Clark was better than Formula 1 today.

"*It was exciting, but it* wasn't *more* exciting," he insists. "Yes, the Stirling Moss, Graham Hill, Jackie Stewart times were wonderful, and that was when Britain started to get on top. Now, BMW — proud, mighty BMW — have moved their motor-sport headquarters from Germany to Britain. They said we *want to win*, and to win you need to be headquartered in Britain because that's where *the motor racing industry of* the world is."

Murray's backing Britain, as he has ever since he volunteered for tank duty in the second world war. He spent an eventful four-and-a-half years in a tattered Europe with the Scots Greys.

"I joined the regiment in France shortly after the invasion, and I fought through France, Belgium, Holland, Germany. We did the link-up *with the Russians at a place* called Wismar on the Baltic coast, and shared Wismar with them for six months, which was an indescribable *experience . . .*"

Describe it for us, Murray. "They shat in the washbasins. There was a V2 fuel dump near us, rocket fuel; they broke into that to drink it and went blind when they did so. They came into our regimental lines and stole our vehicles. They're from another world.

"I left the Army as technical *adjutant of the British Army* of the Rhine Armoured Fighting Vehicle schools at Belsen, *the concentration camp*. We took it over and turned it into a tank training area. They'd mostly cleaned it up when we got there."

He'd won a business scholarship with Dunlop before joining the tanks, and *after demob* he grabbed a job in Dunlop's advertising department. Eight years later, he joined headache pill makers Aspro: "I was punting round Indian villages flogging Aspro and doing the advertising. Then I got headhunted to work on the Esso account at *the McCann-Erickson* ad agency. Then I joined a company that was called Masius Wynn Williams and is now called D'Arcy Masius Benton & Bowles, and I helped them build the business."

When he joined the company in 1969, they had a single office in London and billings worth a £1 million. By the time he left in 1982, he was a member of the board and the management committee, the company had 50 offices in 27 countries and were taking billings of over £1 billion.

Among Walker's big clients were Mars, for whom it is *often alleged that he wrote* the slogan "A Mars a day helps you work, rest and play". But he didn't. "No, it existed when I joined the agency," he *laments*. "Nor did I *think of* 'Trill makes budgies bounce with health', which is ascribed to me. But that Groundhog thing there" — he points at a garish lump of yellow plastic squatting on his desk — "was a gigantically successful campaign we did for Dunlop. The ad agency business is great if you can stand the pace."

Incredibly, from 1949 to 1982, Murray was an adman from Monday to Friday, then would transform himself into the BBC's Mr Motorsport at the weekend. He'd had a go at racing motorbikes after the war — "I had a very high regard for my father and I suspect subconsciously I wanted to emulate him" — but de*cided he had a brighter future* in advertising.

HE HAD better luck following in dad's *footsteps* when he pursued Walker senior's trail to the BBC. After an audition in 1949, he covered the British Grand *Prix at Silverstone on radio*, *then* made his TV debut *later* that year at the Knatts Valley *motorcycle hill-climb in Kent*. Between 1949 and 1962, Graham and Murray Walker were the only father and son sports commentating team the BBC has ever had.

Murray inherited the slot as chief motorcycling commentator after his father's death in 1962. All he had to do then was wait for Raymond Baxter to *get fed up with covering* car-racing and swan off to Tomorrow's World, whereupon "by a process of osmosis, I oozed into the cars".

The BBC's Jonathan Martin apparently believes that motor racing commentary is *the hardest there is, since so* little of the race is actually in view at any moment, let alone the teeming technical shenanigans behind the scenes. "You can't teach anybody to do it," asserts Murray, who reckons there are commentators who know the subject but are lousy broadcasters, as well as good broadcasters who are ham*pered by lack of specialist* knowledge. "The commentator's job is to excite the people listening, and to talk about the drama and history and politics of the sport. It demands enthusiasm, dedication and application, most of the attributes you need *in any field of* endeavour."

There are no junior Walk*ers waiting to step into Mur*ray's hyperbolic shoes. The combination of advertising and international motor racing has meant that Walker has led an almost Whicker-ish existence of ceaseless globe-trotting, and his family life must have suffered. He lives in the country, he says, because that's what his wife Elizabeth *wanted*.

"I'm very lucky to have an understanding and tolerant *wife. I have seen the Formula* 1 life break a lot of marriages, so I'm terribly lucky that I have got a secure home base."

Walker *is so* steeped in F1 lore and legend that you could sit and listen to him all day, reminiscing about Graham and Damon Hill, Frank Williams and Michael Schumacher, Jackie Stewart and *Stirling Moss. He has some* brilliant yarns about the utter cussedness of Nigel Mansell. *Look on the bright side — if* the commentating has to stop, he's threatening to write an autobiography.

Pornography and the perils of the scissors in cyberspace

AZEEM AZHAR on how the Internet is turning into a moral and legal maze

WHEN CompuServe, a US-based online service, this week suspended worldwide access to more than 200 Internet forums because of German concerns that they might contain illegal pornography, it probably hoped that the world's attention would be distracted by festive cheer. It was wrong. The Ohio-based company had stirred a hornets' nest. By acquiescing to the demands of a regional court in Bavaria that it deny access to certain material held on its system, *CompuServe* imposed a veil of censorship on its four million users, whether they lived in Aberdeen, Amsterdam or Albuquerque. Suddenly that Mu*nich* court order had rippled across the world and CompuServe's actions had become not simply *the most* far-reaching example of Internet censorship, but a perfect example of the difficulty of making sense of law in the global village.

The facts of the case are simple enough. CompuServe is a consumer online-service provider. Anyone with a personal computer and a modem *can, for a fee*, dial into CompuServe and send electronic mail and participate in special interest groups, ranging from Beatlemania to beetle-collecting. Additionally, CompuServe offers access to the Internet, from its vast databases of computer *programs to the* World-Wide Web and the source of the recent trouble, Usenet newsgroups, open-ended discussion forums.

German police raided CompuServe's Munich office a month ago looking for pornographic material, and eventually obtained a mandate to ban 200 newsgroups. Among the *obviously pornographic* (such as alt.sex.fetish.feet, and alt.binaries.pictures.erotica.male) you can find the sensitive (shamash.gayjews) and *the ludicrous* (alt.sexy.bald.captains). CompuServe imposed the ban globally rather than just in Germany, because its software isn't sophisticated enough to limit material on a regional basis.

The repercussions are more complex, and reach beyond CompuServe to the Internet itself. CompuServe argues that it was stuck between a rock and a hard place. "The principle is if you want to do business in a country, you comply with the laws of that country", claimed the company. The problem is that, much as the company denies it, a precedent has been set. The fear is that CompuServe's *acquiesence* will open the floodgates, as governments try to censor and regulate the Internet. "If the Iranians object to something that can be banned, if the Burmese object to something that can be banned, and if the African states object to something, that can be banned, there's nothing left to say. Free speech is out of the window," say John Browning, editor of the British edition of Wired magazine, widely regarded as the bible of the digital age.

Traditionally, Internet service providers, which differ from CompuServe because they do not provide any content of their own, have avoided any liability for material users can access through them. "We maintain a policy *of common carrier: if someone* complains, we just say 'We only provide the infrastructure, not the content.' " says Steve Kennedy of Demon, one of Britain's largest Internet *providers. But as these provid*ers become more global and as the Internet assumes a greater importance in everyday discourse and behaviour, the temptation for governments to intervene will increase.

Porn on the Net . . . but how feasible is censorship on a worldwide system that does not recognise international boundaries?

One problem is that, in most cases, those doing the regulating *won't understand the tech*nology. As Demon's Kennedy explains: "We can't censor [Internet] news. The Net is global and it's a mockery to try to restrict it regionally. There is simply no difference accessing it internationally or nationally." Confounding potential attempts to regulate content is the Internet's struc*ture itself. As the online adage* puts it: The Net interprets censorship and routes round it.

"Governments need to understand that cyberspace is a *different territory*," says Esther Dyson, president of the Electronic Frontier Foundation, a free-speech public policy group. "While they can't restrict *their own population*, they can have an impact outside their own borders." Contradictory legislation and conflicting legal obligations from different jurisdictions will also harm business, as the Internet becomes an everyday part of office life.

Most experts agree that the best way out is an international agreement on what is allowed and what isn't, and who is liable for illegal material. But they also agree that such a utopian solution is unlikely to be achieved: "They just *won't get it together*," says Rob Carolina, an Internet expert with law firm Clifford Chance.

When you're dealing with pornography, and what is essentially publishing, any international agreement is even less likely. "When it comes to culturally sensitive issues it gets a lot harder," says Caro*lina. It isn't hard to imagine a* time when Paris clamps down on the excessive use of English in electronic mail.

Dyson and the EFF hope that this pan-cultural, multilingual legal minefield can be avoided. "There is a fair amount of complexity here," she says understatedly, "but there are other ways [than the courts] to block this stuff." New technology will be the first step down this route. Already programs are available which deny Net surfers access to pornography. Until those are commonplace, the prob*lem facing the Internet* and the online world is to ensure that hasty steps, like those taken by the Germans, don't do it unnecessary damage.

Personal portraits . . . images of a continent from Louis Malle's India (above). The director (left) made a virtue of his ignorance, just filming whatever caught his eye

When it was first shown in the sixties, Louis Malle's vision of India caused a political storm. NICHOLAS FRASER unearths what the director regarded as his best work

Passage through India

IN THE late sixties, Louis Malle became bored with the films he was making and went to India. Without really knowing what he was looking for, he began to film. Six months later he returned to a France riven by the riots of 1968 and started to piece together the material he had shot, turning it into eight hour-long episodes.

L'Inde Fantome (Phantom India) was acclaimed in France, but the response was decidedly mixed when it was later shown by the BBC in an English version narrated by Malle. Hundreds of letters poured in from aggrieved, mostly Indian correspondents. They pointed out that Malle had misunderstood modern India, focusing instead on its most degraded and primitive aspects — "untouchables", for instance, the lowest caste whom the Indian government considered no longer to exist, alleging that the social problem had been resolved — and citing Malle's hostility towards English-speaking Indians, out of touch with what the film-maker sentimentally defined as the "real India". The Indian High Commissioner demanded that transmission of the films should be halted, and when this didn't happen, the BBC was banned from India for 18 months.

One of my first acts when I went to work at the BBC was to retrieve the films from the vaults. For hour after hour I sat in the dark, entranced and delighted, wholly a captive of Malle's India. Of course, I could see why Indian officialdom had objected to Malle's take — it was, by any conventional standards of the day, skewed towards primitivism, with short shrift given to birth-control projects and tedious hydroelectric schemes — but the films were also clearly masterpieces. Speaking to Philip French for Malle On Malle, a series of reminiscences about his career, the director had said that this was the work of which he was most proud. I could now see why.

Like an author, a film-maker striving to understand another country can immerse himself in the subject by reading books or visiting local dignitaries; but Malle chose a different route — he resolved to make what he considered to be a virtue of his ignorance, wandering around and looking at what was before him, stopping to film whatever caught his eye.

There were astonishing scenes — vultures picking a water buffalo to pieces, beggars lined up in their dozens outside a temple, a group of workers loading sacks of salt on to a cart — in which Malle tried to come to terms with the seeming indifference displayed by Indians, and his own quite different perceptions of life and death. He admitted that there were things that he couldn't understand and never would, and this gave his films humility, as well as a provisional, essayistic quality. He had filmed rituals imagining that they were one thing, only to discover that something quite different was going on. But it was clear, too, that Malle had learnt a lot in India and, equally important, that he had resolved his crisis as a film-maker. He came back to France with a way of seizing the world around him which was novel for the late sixties and which offers lessons for us, too, in the jaded atmosphere of the nineties.

I had heard that Malle was very ill, and I wanted to show something of the series as quickly as possible. The length of the original posed problems; it is not possible these days to make or show an eight-hour film of this kind. But Malle's perceptions were organised around the simple chronology of his journey, and it seemed possible to compress the material, creating out of this wealth a single feature-length film. The producer, Colin Luke, who had edited the films for the BBC with Malle's collaboration, thought so, too; and he made a 90-minute version, some of which Malle was able to view and approve, before he died.

We tried very hard not to reduce the films to the kind of "highlights" suited to a travelogue. Malle was steeped in sixties "cinema verité", which, in true French style, he converted into an arch way of observing himself while looking at things. I'm sure that some will find the opening scene where he criticises himself for filming peasants in a field (while continuing to film them) quite funny; but this is the real Louis, if not the real India. So are his frequent rhapsodic remarks about the beauty of young Indian girls — which come aptly from the maker of Pretty Baby.

A trifle pomposnly, perhaps, the BBC's director-general at the time, Charles Curran, defended the series to the Indian High Commissioner on the grounds that the BBC did occasionally — where cerebral or "subjective" Frenchmen were concerned, he might have added — "not deal entirely in the good plain fare of the conventional or the wholly impartial". Happily, we have travelled far from this point of view in the past 25 years, and we can now acknowledge Malle's personal mastery of film for what it is.

Malle was brave enough to ask himself how he could uncover Indian "reality", and even though this appeared impossible, he resolved to do so all the same. For the most part he didn't bother to ask Indians about themselves; instead he filmed them, catching both their poverty and their visions of eternity through a series of accidental encounters.

British viewers may be initially thrown by this odd film marriage of Marxist existentialism and Hinduism, but I hope they will be won over, as I was. Sadly, we had to cut the two greatest scenes — the dragging of a huge chariot through Madras during a religious procession, and the exquisite sequence of sacred dancing, both of which run to over half an hour — but I think enough is preserved of Malle's film-making genius.

India was in fashion during the sixties. Alas, many pilgrims in pursuit of non-industrialised simplicity became woozy, succumbing to the fantasy of instant ecstasy; but, luckily for us, Malle never abandoned his Voltairean haute-bourgeois classicism and poise. "There you have India," he remarks wittily about the dancers. "A conception of the world which escapes us, a social system which baffles us, an economic reality which we find shocking; but also the searching, fragile grace of two girls engaged in a dialogue with the gods."

Louis Malle did return to making feature films, but his vision of the world was profoundly altered. Henceforth, his work became progressively less structured, and it dealt more with innocents — like the child Vichy militant Lucien Lacombe or the two schoolboys, Jew and Gentile, of Au Revoir Les Enfants, or old people such as the forlorn sage-sadhu played by Burt Lancaster in Atlantic City.

In the end, Malle remains a greater film-maker than his nouvelle vague French contemporaries, Truffaut and Godard, because his films were more generously open, less obsessed with formal questions of style, and because he had learned to reach beyond the narrow, over-trodden paths of French culture.

"I tend to repeat myself, so I try to resist the temptation to return to what I have explored," he said. Seeing film-making as a work in progress, feeling equally at home wherever he filmed, Louis Malle found a way of conveying the most nuanced realities by means of the simplest narrative forms. When he died in Los Angeles last month, he was still travelling along the thousand paths he had found in India.

Fine Cut: Louis Malle's India, A Film Journey is shown on BBC2 at 8.25pm tomorrow. Nicholas Fraser is the series editor of Fine Cut.

Happy eaters

Television

Stuart Jeffries

THERE was always something rhetorically inept about the exclamation mark in the title of Delia Smith's cookery book, One Is Fun! It may have been motivated by the best of sentiments, but the effect of its grim-faced jauntiness was to remind you strongly of the prevailing view it was supposed to be repudiating — one is miserable. one is a single hob and a can opener, one isn't enough to make cooking worthwhile.

It was part of the purpose of **Slice Of Life** (BBC2) to show that the publication of this book was astute because it capitalised on the break-up of families — today, single-person homes outnumber family households, the programme claimed. Just as Katherine Whitehorn's book on bedsitter cookery in the early sixties courted the new generation of culinarily-challenged youngsters who might have wanted to entertain guests, so Delia in the eighties served a growing body of people who might have wanted to please themselves.

But that was only one part of the complicated social history that this engaging series, which concluded last night, has told. Slice Of Life has traced the postwar development of British eating habits from the dark night of overcooked meat and two veg served daily by the wife to the family, to the hopeful dawn of a nation keen to experiment in what Delia called "the global supermarket".

Of course, it's easy to overstate this transformation. More men may now know what lies beyond the kitchen door, but the programme reported that only 20 per cent of couples share the cooking, even though 54 per cent believe that they should — which doubtless means many women are on the verge of a nervous breakdown, juggling jobs, families and filets mignons in Bearnaise sauce. And, while foreign travel and a more diverse ethnic mix have helped to make British cooking something more than an oxymoron, there are still enough Pot Noodles around to stop anyone becoming complacent.

But the two households chiefly featured in Slice Of Life gave cause for hope. The Watts were unashamed foodies, whose young children would blithely offer such sentences as "My favourite starter is . . ." Alphabetti spaghetti? Crisps and pop? ". . . cantaloupe melon and Parma ham", or (in a scandalised voice) "Some kids have hardly any idea what steak haché is . . ." The Burkes were a family at ease with making at least four different meals a night to cater for their different palates, and even the man of the house had watched a TV cookery course so he could join in. It felt as though something much more than tastebuds were being revolutionised.

Poor Mick Hucknall. He came to do a top turn, to prove that he could hold the tune of Ding Dong Merrily On High. But, really, nobody was listening: all eyes were on his host, who had his arm up the backside of a partridge and a career in tatters after clouting the BBC's chief commissioning editor with the bird.

It had all started so well. There was a convivial gathering at the painstakingly assembled replica of Alan Partridge's home. Three hostesses, Yvette, Martine and Sam ("My Christmas crackers. I wouldn't mind pulling one of them," he claimed predictably) had been hired for the evening to circulate with mulled wine and Boasters. It all went wrong when Partridge demonstrated his subtlety as an interviewer of a disabled golfer ("But I'm on your side! There are disabled people who won't get into the Strand Theatre tonight because we've taken the ramps so you could come on the show!"). It got worse when the charity stunt to pull the biggest cracker in the world failed and as a result the dialysis machine could not be donated to a hospital ("So we could have got 14 dialysis machines instead of making this programme?" asked one guest unhelpfully).

Knowing Me, Knowing Yule (BBC2), despite, or (who knows?) because of the twin horrors of a double-breasted cardigan and a Queen Anne TV/VCR cabinet, was the best yet of the Alan Partridge satirical shows. It reminded one of nothing so much as Sooty And Sweep, which always started harmoniously enough, but always ended with hysteria, mindless violence between the puppets and Harry Corbett nursing a black eye with a steak. All of which is much more emblematic of real Christmas than some grinning bloke with a white beard and apple cheeks.

Forget the tuner dial. Choosing your programmes from the TV is the future of radio, says ANNE KARPF

Making waves on the box

IMAGINE being able to order your radio programmes the way you now order a pizza. The BBC is currently developing a new service which may change the delivery of radio beyond recognition.

BBC Radio is conducting an "audio on demand" (AOD) trial in Cambridgeshire, the first results of which will come in the new year. No need to hang around for the digital revolution: this particular innovation is brought to us via optic fibre cable. It works like this. Your cable company provides you with a little black box that looks like a video recorder and sits over your TV. It's actually a very simple Apple Macintosh computer, but you won't need to be computer literate to use it.

All you do is log on to the system via your handset and, eureka, your TV screen will be split into nine different, numbered pictures. Want radio drama? Press box three, and up comes a range of different radio plays on offer that week. In the mood for a documentary? Press box five and see which features are currently available. And so on. From Radio 1's Danny Rampling to The Archers, Choral Evensong to Analysis, 150 hours of network radio programmes will be there for the choosing, to be heard when you want them rather than at a time scheduled by a BBC executive. And they come to you via your normal radio, not bizarrely out of the telly.

For some this sounds like nirvana at the touch of a switch. Those, like Tom Stoppard, who mark up their listening for the seven days ahead in the Radio Times each week, will love AOD to death, although they would be served just as well by the arrival of the selected programmes on cassette.

Another obvious beneficiary will be schools, especially as schools' programmes are now to be banished into the night, where it's assumed they'll be recorded by time-setting in the small hours. AOD means they only have to tab down the menu and select what they want when they want it. Eight schools are included in the trial and are using the service right now.

But AOD isn't an unmixed blessing. For a start, it can't handle live programming: it's all about pre-recorded radio and not the streamed breakfast shows to which most young people wake and rise, and which depend not only on frequent time and weather checks for their popularity, but also on their "nowness".

What's more, for the foreseeable future AOD will only be available in "television" rooms, rather than in each listening room (including kitchen and bathroom) and the car. And the BBC has no idea if this is a service which people will want. Paul Robinson, head of strategy and development at BBC Radio who's overseeing the trial, says "People are very busy, and what they already get may be good enough and satisfy their needs. On the other hand busy people may want to be able to listen only to what they choose when they choose it."

My own fears are broader. Will AOD be another stage in the customisation of our culture, so that everyone is doing their own thing, and there's even less shared experience than before? And whatever happened to surprise, the mainstay of public service broadcasting, which brings us not only what we know we want, but also often what we think we don't, or don't even know about, and decide we love.

Robinson is an optimist. Video cassettes after all didn't kill off TV programmes: Monty Python videos sell by their tens of thousands even though the series has recently been very successfully repeated. And he argues that there are certain key areas of experience that people need to share: he doesn't anticipate us all atomised in our own little listening bubbles. He also stresses that the BBC isn't investigating AOD as a commercial venture — it's free — but as a way of bringing people more of what they want. The BBC awaits the first trial results with interest. So do I.

Reviews

POP

The Prodigy

Brixton Academy

IT'S NOT so long ago that The Prodigy were just another cheesy rave troupe. Towards the end of 1994, though, they released an album, Music For The Jilted Generation, which took observers by surprise. Where other commercial techno tended to harp on about the euphoric aspects of love and drugs and dancing, Jilted Generation was angry and intimidating.

Overnight, The Prodigy and their leader Liam Howlett came to be seen as the missing link between rave and rock'n'roll. Howlett's voice and movements were jerky and paranoid and hard to take your eyes off, though the show's real impetus derived from the rib-cage-rattling, hardcore rhythms, sweetened by a judicious use of melody. In a lively musical year, this was surely one of the most enthralling and invigorating performances there has been. To witness it was to realise that this is the real Britpop; a pop that could only be British, not by virtue of some twee parochialism, but as a consequence of all the chaotic cultural processes that still make this country.

Andrew Smith

THEATRE

South Pacific

The Drill Hall

THERE is a small miracle taking place at The Drill Hall, where Phil Willmott's low-budget production removes the soft centre from Rodgers and Hammerstein's lush romantic musical and replaces it with something altogether more robust. The romance is definitely played down and American colonialism played up. But the really terrific thing about this strongly sung evening is that it looks and feels absolutely real. There are no lurid Technicolor sunsets, no slick chorus lines or snazzy choreography. The chorus is lumpy, sometimes thumpy. When they do dance, it is with an exuberance born of everyday experience rather than Broadway values. Peter Polycarpou's fine Emile is slightly down-at-heel, even a little seedy; Joanna Maddison's Nellie is a dependable, honest sort of girl — which makes her sudden revision to small-town racism all the more shocking; and Christopher Howard's Joe Cable is no hero, but a slightly foolish madcap. Best of all is Patti Boulaye's Bloody Mary, a sharp-nosed businesswoman who knows the cost of everything and the value of nothing.

The whole thing has been done at a fraction of the cost and with a million times more imagination than any Shaftesbury Avenue musical. West End producers could learn a thing or two.

☐ Box Office 0171 637 8270

Lyn Gardner

The Book of the Week

Play the 'White Shark' Way

Gregg Norman is one of the finest golfers the sport has ever seen. Winner of over 70 tournaments worldwide, he is internationally admired and respected as a golfing superstar.

'Greg Norman's Advanced Golf' is packed with stunning, full-colour, step-by-step photographs, specially commissioned for the book, aimed at showing golfers of all abilities how to play the game the 'White Shark' way.

With text written by Gregg and his coach 'Butch' Harmon, the book comprehensively covers all aspects of golf; driving, fairway play, bunkers, chipping, pitching and putting - from the tee to the green.

Order your copy for £20 with FREE Delivery.

Credit Card Hotline 0500 418 419

Please send me ..... copies of 'Gregg Norman'. I enclose a cheque for £..... to Guardian Books, or, debit my Access/Visa/Delta/Mastercard No

Signature: Expiry Date:

Mrs / Ms / Mr Address

Postcode Tel

Post to: Guardian Books, 29 Pall Mall Deposit, Barley Rd, London W10 6BL.

E-Mail bkd@mail.bogo.co.uk

☐ Please do not send any further mailings from other carefully selected companies

Books@TheGuardian

Clued up? Test your mastering of the arts this year

QUESTIONS, questions, questions . . . Yes, it's that time of year again — Christmas quizzes, end of year competitions, all designed to show up your ignorance of what happened in 1995. But never fear, a solution is at hand: the Festive Answer Service. Yes, we've dispensed with questions to bring the definitive answers to this year's key cultural questions. Impress your friends! Bluff your way through the New Year period with your powers of recall and apparent mastery of 1995's cultural highlights.

And remember, information is more important than understanding.

Tilda Swinton . . . 'resting'

FILM

1. Quentin Tarantino.
2. A mint-flavoured condom.
3. A Royale with cheese.
4. The total was reportedly $175 million, of which $3.8 million was spent on the set, $2.4 million on the crew's meal bonuses, $105,000 on a week's work by a scriptwriter, and $1,900 a night for Kevin Costner's villa.
5. *Quentin Tarantino.*

THEATRE

1. The ferry to Bruges.
2. The stage was too high, you couldn't hear anything, and what was all that straw doing on the roof?
3. Ken and Emma.
4. A severed head. Max Stafford Clark had already gone, leaving the Royal Court's artistic director Stephen Daldry to take the flak.
5. No, Dame Judi was "singing".

BOOKS

1. There is no such thing as an intelligent building.
2. She may be a distant relation and claims to have read Dr Zhivago.
3. Reputedly, $20,000 for dental implant surgery.
4. "Famous" Seamus.
5. Wrong. Naomi is a novelist while Kate merely published a book of her favourite pictures of herself.

Mr Darcy . . . 'oooh'

MUSIC

1. A marketing term coined to promote various British pop groups.
2. He died in August, disproving the theory that old hippies never die, their beards just grow.
3. Slave.
4. John, Paul, George and Ringo are still alive.
5. Soldier, Soldier.

ART

1. George wears glasses.
2. *Mother And Child Reunited*, mixed media, perspex, formaldehyde, calf, Superglue, elastic bands, Sellotape.
3. Tilda was not sleeping, she was "resting".
4. A camera through every available orifice in her body.
5. Three naked women, with a value of £7.6 million.

BROADCAST

1. The gloves didn't fit.
2. Under the patio.
3. Martin Bashir.
4. "Oooh, Mr Darcy."
5. Anderson Country. Paul Gambaccini survived.

Compiled by Dan Glaister

Naomi Campbell . . . 'author'

Sir Trenchard Cox

Breath of fresh air in a musty museum

TRENCHARD Cox, who has died aged 90, retired as director of the Victoria and Albert Museum almost 30 years ago, but is still regarded as one of the leaders of the post-war reconstruction of museums and galleries in this country.

He was born into the comfort of an Edwardian upper-middle-class family, and went to Eton and King's College, Cambridge, where he took a first in modern languages. There were no art history degrees in England at the time and Cox took the usual apprenticeship route, first at the National Gallery checking signatures for Sir Charles Holmes, and then in Prints and Drawings at the British Museum under Campbell Dodgson. This was followed by a period in Berlin to take a course with medieval art historian Adolf Goldschmidt. In later years he spoke of the anti-semitism in Germany in the 1920s, "not very different from that current among my own class in England at the time". It was Holmes and Goldschmidt among his mentors whom he held in highest regard. Then, after a stay in Paris, he produced in 1931 his first monograph, Jehan Foucquet, Native Of Tours.

Cox's professional career began as an assistant keeper at the Wallace Collection (1932-39), where his taste was formed and connoisseurship sharpened. He retained a wide-ranging interest in all the visual arts, but the decorative arts of the 18th century became and remained his forte. He wrote A General Guide To The Wallace Collection (1933), which followed his The National Gallery, A Room By Room Guide (1930), as well as A Short Illustrated History Of The Wallace Collection And Its Founders (1936). Beautifully written, these publications demonstrated Cox's flair for popular education.

His last task at the Wallace Collection was to organise and supervise the packing and evacuation of the collections in the summer of 1939. During the war he was seconded to the Home Office, and became private secretary to Sir Alexander Maxwell, the Permanent Under-Secretary.

Cox's big career break came in 1945 when he became director of the Birmingham City Museum and Art Gallery. The challenges were awesome, and his success in restoring the museum to a position of major importance in the country secured his reputation in the field. To begin with, its premises — largely taken over for council offices during the war — had to be recovered for museum use, and repairs and refurbishment achieved with a minimum of funding.

Here, as throughout his career, it was his personal qualities which were responsible for his success. City councillors were won over by his friendship, modesty, and determination as well as his professional standing. To his staff he was always strongly supportive. No achievement, be it a new display, an exhibition or publication, ever went by without a personal note of congratulation from the Director, and his colleagues repaid him with loyalty and devotion.

The Museum's Friends, an early venture into this area in post-war years, were lovingly nurtured and became central to the museum's high standing in the local community. Meanwhile, with the publication in 1947 of his monograph on David Cox, he paid tribute to Birmingham's most famous painter.

IN 1955 he was appointed director of the Victoria and Albert Museum in succession to Sir Leigh Ashton. The post-war reconstruction of the V&A was nearing completion. What was needed was a new lead from the top, with particular emphasis on the raising of staff morale. It was a task for which Cox was eminently suited. Within weeks of his arrival he had become renowned for knowing the names of all members of staff. In an institution where departmental heads had not been on speaking terms, and junior staff felt discouraged, the change was dramatic.

His directorship was marked by successes in many fields. Essential rebuilding included the provision of three new floors for the National Art Library. He made major acquisitions and established education and conservation departments. Finally, and most important, the quality of the museum's exhibitions in the 1960s became legendary, with the great Opus Anglicanum show of 1963 the best remembered. It was followed by The Orange And The Rose (1964), exploring Anglo-Dutch cultural history, the sort of contextual exhibition now widely thought to have been invented in the 1980s.

At the root of these achievements lay the director's pastoral care underpinned by structural changes in staff management. For the first time research assistants, many of them women, were able to cross the class divide to the assistant keeper grade. Also, for the first time, a black Warder was promoted to supervising warder. With hindsight these changes were inevitable, and long overdue. However in the early 1960s they required the initiative and active support of the director.

In the profession at large, Cox's qualities were widely recognised. He was one of the few national museum directors to take a consistent active interest in the Museums Association, becoming its president in 1963. Believing national museums should be generous towards the regions, he encouraged the expansion of the V&A's circulation department (long since abolished), which sent more than 100 exhibitions a year to galleries and art schools throughout the country. He was also founding president of the National Association of Decorative and Fine Art Societies and, through the Council of Museums and personal friendship, was recognised internationally as a leading member of the profession. His fluency in European languages made him a favourite for British Council lecture tours. His closest links were with France, as his Légion d'Honneur suggests.

After retirement in 1966, Cox became people's warden at St Martin-in-the-Fields, taking an active part in its social services. The church remained his spiritual home and provided much-needed support when his wife Maisie Anderson, a well-known authority on English church decoration, died in 1974. The couple had been married for 41 years.

If asked what it was that made Trenchard Cox a role model for so many of his younger colleagues, the answer would centre upon his essential qualities; integrity, modesty and humanity.

Michael Kauffmann

VIP guide . . . director Trenchard Cox showing off one of the treasures of the V&A PHOTOGRAPH: HULTON DEUTSCH

Terence Hodgkinson writes: In Birmingham and at the V&A in 1956 where the difficulties were on a far larger scale, Sir Trenchard Cox played an outstanding part in the regeneration of British public collections after the second world war.

But his most personal achievement was that human relations between members of the museum's staff became relatively cordial. In Sir John Pope-Hennessy's autobiography, Cox is succinctly described as "a neurotically modest man of extraordinary niceness and of considerable moral weight."

Happily, he was also very shrewd and had a strong sense of the ridiculous; but the "niceness" and the moral weight were all-important in his career. They won an immediate response in Birmingham, where he arrived as a complete outsider. Later, in the fairly censorious world of the V&A, he became loved and respected by staff at all levels.

Trenchard Cox, museum director, born July 31, 1905; died December 21, 1995

Emmanuel Lévinas

Encounters with meaning

THE philosopher Emmanuel Lévinas, who is often credited with having introduced phenomenology to France, has died aged 89. Born in Kaunas, Lithuania, the son of a bookseller, he grew up speaking Russian as his first language, and began to study Hebrew at the age of six. The outbreak of the first world war led to a temporary exile in the Ukrainian city of Kharkov; the aftermath of the Russian Revolution brought the family back to Lithuania. In retrospect, Lévinas regretted having had to leave Ukraine where, he said, "history went on without him."

In 1923, Lévinas chose to study philosophy in Strasbourg, where he established a lifelong friendship with the novelist and critic Maurice Blanchot. In philosophical terms, the decisive encounter came in 1928 when he attended Husserl's lectures in Freiburg, and read Heidegger's Being And Time. On his return to Strasbourg he completed his doctoral thesis on intentionality in Husserl (published in 1930), became a French citizen and married Raïssa Rachel, a musician from Vienna.

Mobilised as an interpreter when war broke out, Lévinas was captured and interned in a camp in Germany. His prisoner-of-war status saved his life; his family in Lithuania perished at the hands of the Nazis. When France was liberated, he became director of the Ecole Normale Israélite in Paris, where he presided over a renaissance in French Jewish studies.

The experience of the Shoah stimulated a new interest in the Talmud, and the lectures and studies collected in Difficile Liberté (1963) and the Quatre Lectures Talmudiques (1968) made important contributions to the tradition of Talmudic interpretation. Although Lévinas regarded the existence of Israel as essential to the survival of Judaism in the post-Holocaust world, he could be very critical of Israeli policies and argued that Israeli nationalism and Jewish identity were not synonymous.

For much of his career, Lévinas was a philosopher's philosopher, highly regarded by professionals like Sartre, but largely unknown to the general public. Totalité et Infinité (1961) is his major work, but it won him little fame and it was not until 1973 that he was finally appointed to a chair at the Sorbonne.

The interest taken in his work by a younger generation, and especially Jacques Derrida, finally brought him an unexpected popularity. In France, virtually all his major works, originally published in small editions by specialist academic houses, are now available in inexpensive paperback editions.

The Talmudic and phenomenological tradition of Husserl and Heidegger are the main sources for Lévinas's innovatory and profoundly humanistic philosophy. His central themes are the encounter with the other, and the meaning of being human in a century dominated by wars, massacres and the Shoah.

Lévinas . . . wry amusement

WEAVING together themes from the Jewish and phenomenological traditions, he speaks movingly of the meeting with the other as an encounter with the human "in the total nudity of its eyes". The other is not a potential threat, as in Sartre's existentialism, but a stimulus to an unflinching encounter that allows Lévinas to reformulate in tragic terms the old commandment: "Thou shalt not kill."

A man who viewed the world with wry amusement, Lévinas was a polyglot at home in four cultures. All his books were written in French, which he learned by reading Corneille with a dictionary to hand, but he habitually spoke Russian with his wife, who died in 1994. From childhood onwards, he read the Bible in Hebrew, and Tolstoy and Dostoevsky in the original Russian. His main philosophical influences were German, but his Humanisme De L'Autre Homme (1972) is prefaced by a quotation from King Lear: "I should e'en die with pity to see another thus".

David Macey

Emmanuel Lévinas, philosopher, born December 30, 1905; died December 25, 1995

Nina Verchinina

Muse and movement

NINA Verchinina, the Russian dancer, choreographer and teacher, who has died aged 85, will always be remembered for creating major roles in the "symphonic" ballets of Leonide Massine which caused such a furore among 1930s music critics. But she had a wide repertoire in the pre-war Ballet Russe, and danced with other companies and her own troupes before settling in Brazil as a teacher. She taught class on a Friday afternoon, received an ovation from her pupils, and died in her sleep the next day.

Born in Moscow, the daughter of a tea merchant, she was brought up in Shanghai and Manchuria where she had her first ballet lessons. When the family moved to Paris in 1917 she began studying with the great Maryinsky ballerina Olga Preobrajenska, but considered the classical technique old fashioned. Then in 1927 she saw Isadora Duncan in her last performance. Thereafter Verchinina's life was to be devoted to dance.

In 1928 she joined the corps de ballet of the Ida Rubinstein Company in Paris — Frederick Ashton and William Chappell also gained valuable experience there — and the following year had her first opportunity to study with Bronislava Nijinska. Her style, quite different from that of Preo, appealed at once to Verchinina, stronger, more powerful and emphasising great energy especially in jumps. She also studied with Rudolf Laban, becoming one of the first classical dancers to add a more contemporary technique to her work. (She wanted to study with Martha Graham, but Graham firmly said no, she was to find her own style.)

It was this quality of plasticity of movement which appealed to Massine. When he embarked on his revolutionary series of ballets danced to great symphonies he created major roles for Verchinina in the first two, staged in London in 1933.

IN LES Prèsages, to Tchaikovsky's Fifth, he gave her the first movement, representing Action, in which Cyril Beaumont, faithful and exact chronicler of ballets from the time of Diaghilev onwards, described her as resembling "a Tanagra figurine . . ." and said "her head had something of that unearthly, mystical quality characteristic of Blake's angels." In Choreartium, to Brahms's Fourth, she dominated the second movement as a tragic muse. And he used her again in 1936 in his Symphonie Fantastique, to Berlioz.

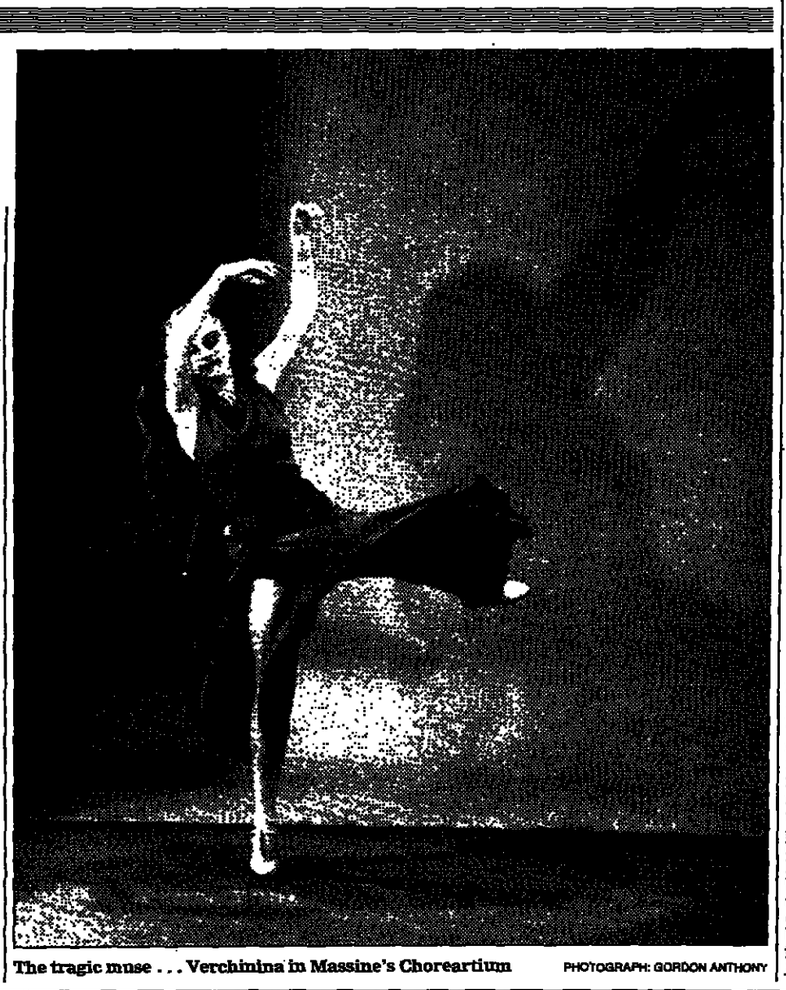
Thereafter she danced with the San Francisco Opera Ballet, in Cuba, Brazil and Argentina, returning intermittently to the Ballet Russe company of Colonel de Basil — her sister Olga Morosova was his wife. While acting as ballet mistress at the Teatro Municipal in Rio de Janeiro, in 1964 she married Count Jean de Beausact, who was to finance several of her own troupes which appeared in Spain and South America.

After three years in Argentina she settled in Brazil in 1954; at the Teatro Municipal again and at the Casina Copacabana she taught and choreographed, spending her last years in her own studio.

Massine's symphonic ballets fell out of favour for several decades but Verchinina lived long enough to know of magnificent revivals, in recent years, of Prèsages and Choreartium, in Paris, Birmingham and New York, and to hear the roles described as for ever hers.

Mary Clarke

Nina Verchinina, dancer, choreographer, teacher, born January 20, 1910; died December 18, 1995



The tragic muse . . . Verchinina in Massine's Choreartium PHOTOGRAPH: GORDON ANTHONY

Weekend Birthdays

THERE'S a line that journalists know what story they want and then lure the truth towards it. Which would explain the 20-year success of Michael Rocky Ryan, 58 today, who claims he's a "storyteller". His solicitor says "he's achieved a moderate degree of celebrity as a perpetrator of harmless hoaxes upon newspapers by persuading them to print totally bogus stories." "Persuading" is the only off-key word in that sentence. Ryan's talent has been to understand just what newsdesks hunger for on slow Wednesday afternoons and supply the tip which activates the dream: sex and drug orgies on the upper slopes of Mount Everest; Shergar alive and well and living in Jersey. Savour the time that a full ITN crew, in pursuit of a disgraced Irish bishop, attempted to negotiate an interview with him through the letterbox in Ryan's Neasden front door. It is written that Ryan pulled his first scam while at home recovering after a horse had fallen on him. How could we bear to cross-check that? We print the legend gratefully. VR

Today's other birthdays: Gordon Banks, former footballer, 58; David Bedford, athlete, 46; Sarah Brown, senior civil servant, 52; Vladimir Bukovsky, dissident, scientist, writer, 53; Brian Curtois, broadcaster, 59; Geraint Davies, controller, BBC Wales, 52; Prof Dame Rosalinde Hurley, microbiologist, 66; Mark Kaplan, violinist, 42; Timothy Mo, novelist, 45; The Rt Rev Peter Nott, Bishop of Norwich, 62; Lady Oppenheimer, theologian, 69; Mary Rayner, children's writer and illustrator, 62; Nick Skelton, showjumper, 38; Patti Smith, singer, songwriter and artist, 49; Stan Tracey, jazz pianist, 69; Tracy Ullman, comedienne, 36; Janine Wood, actress, 32.

Tomorrow's birthdays: Michael Bonallack, golfer, 61; Steve Bruce, footballer, 35; John Denver, singer, 52; Roy Greenslade, former editor, Daily Mirror, 49; Sir Anthony Hopkins, actor, 58; Tess Jaray, artist, 58; Ben Kingsley, actor, 52; Sarah Miles, actress, 52; Dr Valerie Pearl, historian, 69; Alex Salmond, Scottish Nationalist MP, 41; Carol Sanders, professor of French, University of Surrey, 51; Donna Summer, singer, 47; Simon Wiesenthal, Nazi hunter, 87.

Another Day

December 30, 1950: My "mother" [Mrs Jane King Moore, whom C S Lewis "adopted," having lost his own mother early] has had to retire into a Nursing Home. She is in no pain but her mind has almost completely gone. What traces of it remain seem gentler and more placid than I have known it for years. I visit her every day, and am divided between a (rational?) feeling that this process of withdrawal is merciful and even beautiful, and a quite different feeling of horror. *C S Lewis, Letters. Geoffrey Bles, 1965.*

Death Notices

FREEMAN, Leonard, peacefully in hospital on December 28th, aged 92. Dearly beloved husband of Ena, very special father, grandfather and great grandfather, former mayor of Hammersmith, Freeman of the City of London and of Hammersmith, and life-long Labour Party activist. Funeral service at Ashlew Road Church, 12.30 pm, Thursday 4th January. Family flowers only please, but donations if desired to Ronald MacDonald's House, 115-122 Snowfield, London SE1 1SF. Charity no. 294248.

GLEAVE, on 27th December in his 94th year, James Eric, dear husband of the late Rhoda (Smedley), father of Geoffrey and Nevrile, father in law of Claire and Pat, and grandfather of James and Laura. Service at St. Catherine's Church, Park Road Timperley on Thursday, 4th January at 1.30pm, followed by interment at Christ Church, Thorley Lane, Timperley. Family flowers only, otherwise, if wished, donations for St. Catherine's Church may be forwarded to: Kermeen Dewey & Sons, Funeral Directors, 2 Grove Lane, Hale, nr. Altrincham, Cheshire WA15 8JE. Tel. 0161 980 7010/3878.

JACOBS, Dr. Alan Leon, formerly Physician to the Whittington Hospital, died at home in London aged 89, 25th December 1995. Enquiries to Co-operative Funeral Directors 0181 444 2396.

Acknowledgments

TEMPLE, Lilian wishes to acknowledge all the kind messages of sympathy she received from dear comrades, family and friends on the recent death of her beloved partner, Phil Piratin.

In Memoriam

HOWLETT, Jack Kellyn, b.7 April 1918 - d.31 December 1984. Remembered with great affection and always in our thoughts. Jackie Power & Family.

To place your announcement telephone 0171 611 9080

Face to Faith

Midnight's child of change

Jay Griffiths

THE MIDNIGHT moment of New Year's Eve is a time after an end and before a beginning. It is a junction, a threshold — Time's strange pause in the doorway between the posts of two years.

Janus, god of doorways, was the Roman god of new year, and society still pays him lip service in the naming of January. Janus also survives in an unconscious heritage: his two-faced image, looking forward and backwards, is reflected in two new year customs; singing Auld Lang Syne looks back at the past, while new year resolutions look forward to the future.

Most public festivals are overt in chronicling a myth or event, or giving a nod to the odd god, but the modern new year festival celebrates the passage of Time itself. And the level gaze into the eye of Time takes courage, for Time is a concept as ambiguous as Janus to the human mind.

The first-footing figure, standing in the doorway at New Year's Eve, is by custom a dark stranger, coming in silence. It is a neat personification of future time; the unknowable, inaudible arrival, a figure of elastic ambivalence, who might be your betrayer or defender, your hangman, confuser or friend. Riddled with ambiguity, the only certainty is that it will bring change.

To make a resolution is to turn over a new leaf. Custom and nature intertwine here. The festival at the turning point of the year encourages both metaphoric new leaves and nature's literal new leaves. In the dead of winter, nature's energy is stored but unreleased, and the new year festival can be understood in part as an ancient memory of sympathetic magic; the energy stored in the champagne bottle is uncorked, the frothy spurt of bubbles releases the seminal energy of spring. Paganism persists, pentimento.

The midwinter festival has always been characterised by release; audacious indignity flaunting itself uncorked. The medieval and Tudor lords of misrule released society from everyday restraints for the 12 days of Christmas. During the new year Saturnalia, Romans were released from duty in public affairs, law courts and schools, servants were released from servitude in a fizzing carnival freedom, and the statue of Saturn, bound all through the year, had his bands untied in symbolic yearly liberation.

"A year and a day" was traditionally the moment of release from several obligations, the binding time of a pagan wedding, the hiring period of labourers, the time during which a murder charge could be brought, and the time limit of a curse. There is something humane in an annual limit; "forever" can be cruel, and endings can bring release and a quality of mercy, unrestrained.

In a spiritual context, release means the cancelling of old sins, and the mercy of forgiveness. Jews are required to seek the forgiveness of others at the Jewish new year. Catholicism stresses the importance of asking the forgiveness of God before the end of the calendar year.

In modernity's psychodynamic liturgy, a new year's resolution offers a release from learned responses and habitual behaviour patterns, and a chance of self-forgiveness. In all three cases, the seeking of forgiveness is only worthwhile if a new beginning is allowed, if the threshold of a new year is a place of release from the past.

But symbolically, the place of release is simultaneously the place of risk. A junction is the location of both maximum freedom and maximum anxiety, ambivalent as the crossroad was to the Romans — a place of opportunity, but also the burial place of suicides and criminals, a place of both chance and mischance.

It is a nowhere place, between departure and return, a halt between two roads. There is a boomerang relation between beginnings and ends. A beginning departure contains a returning end within it. But there is no similar energy in an end. The tail-end of an end does not entail a new beginning with any such inevitable tendency.

Arguably, therefore, the end of the year provokes an unconscious anxiety over whether Time itself will continue, and the annual wake for the death of the old year is an apprehensive wakefulness to watch whether the fragile phoenix of the future will arise from the ashes of the past.

It is a gap in time which can make the human psyche awed and lonely. The tradition of holding hands is a clutch at comfort. It is also perhaps another instance of sympathetic magic, an attempt to encourage the new year to join hands with the old, to take Time by the hand and pull it in, through the doorway of Janus.

Jay Griffiths is a writer

Doonesbury

BY GARRY TRUDEAU

MoneyGuardian

New year brings windfall for 2.7m people who placed the maximum in highly-popular scheme devised by then-Chancellor John Major

Tessa savers will strike it lucky

Midnight chimes ring in £3,400 tax-free payout

Margaret Hughes and Nick Pandya

WHEN Big Ben strikes midnight tomorrow, some 2.7 million savers will be raising an extra glass to a new year which will make them up to £3,400 richer.

This will be the tax-free payout for savers who invested in John Major's baby Tessa — who made her debut five years ago, on January 1, 1991 — during her first year. Nearly £7 billion invested in that first year will produce total payouts next year of around £8 billion in maturing capital and rolled-up interest. With the return of their capital those who invested the full £9,000 permitted over five years will have an extra £12,000 or more.

Over the past five years more than 4 million savers have invested more than £25 billion in Tessas which, together with an estimated £2 billion plus in rolled-up interest, will be released over the next few years.

But once the celebrations are over, newly prosperous savers will be deciding whether they want to stick with the "culture of thrift", which John Major sought to revive when he launched Tessa in his one and only Budget as Chancellor, or to blow their new found wealth on an exotic holiday, new car or techno toys.

There will be no shortage of aggressive persuaders trying to influence their decision. The travel trade is already targeting them, and retailers are hoping that maturing Tessas will provide them with a much-needed cash bonanza.

Some savers will use the cash to pay off mortgages and other loans, while others may top up their pensions. The majority, who are expected to stick with the saving habit, face a daunting plethora of choice from both Tessa providers and other financial institutions which hope to persuade them to be more adventurous and take a punt on the stock market.

Those who decide to reinvest their funds in the follow-on Tessas which run until January 2001 face an even mor difficult task than they did five years ago — as will anyone investing in a Tessa for the first time. Apart from weighing up the pros and cons of fixed or variable rates they will have to come to terms with the new breeds of escalating and stock market-linked Tessas.

Making the wrong choice will be costly, as projected returns from maturing Tessas launched in 1991 indicate. A survey of 85 Tessas coming to the end of their term shows a difference of £981 in pay-outs between the top and bottom performers. Those who invested in fixed-rate Tessas fared best, though such deals were few and far between.

A critical question for anyone considering opening a Tessa or reinvesting in a follow-up account is whether it is the best home for this money now. While their circumstances may have changed so too have interest rates.

Some financial advisers argue that, with even the best Tessas currently only yielding between 7 to 7.5 per cent, and the chance of further cuts in the new year, it is time to look for an alternative haven.

That said, as a tax-free savings vehicle Tessas should form part of everyone's portfolio. Depositing the maximum amount over five years in a new Tessa at a fixed rate of at least 7 per cent could accumulate around £11,155.

Most investors respond to the headline rates quoted by the savings institution. But with institutions often paying bonuses, or penalising those who transfer before the end of the five-year term, that is not much of a yardstick.

Savers should look at the track record for a consistently competitive rate, and consider the whole package, including bonuses, transfer penalties and loss of interest on withdrawals.

As the accompanying table shows, among the banks and building societies which have declared their rates for their new Tessas, several offer fixed-rate deals ranging from 7.5 per cent to 7.64 per cent. However, given the uncertain political outlook and the possibility of an, albeit modest, rise in interest rates after the election, some advisers suggest taking out a variable-rate Tessa now and switching to a fixed-rate deal later if rates start to rise.

Several regional building societies, such as the Monmouthshire, paying a variable 7.6 per cent on deposits starting from £1, and the Darlington, which pays 7.5 per cent on a similar amount, offer more attractive rates on smaller deposits. But they will only accept funds from their existing Tessa customers.

The Royal Bank of Scotland has come up with a novel scheme aimed also at those reinvesting their full £9,000 Tessa capital. The bank pays fixed interest rates rising on a sliding scale from 6.75 per cent in year one to 9.25 per cent in the fifth year. Over five years the average return will be 7.9 per cent.

The West Bromwich Building Society is offering investors who cannot decide between fixed or variable rates a Tessa which combines both. It pays a fixed rate of 7.15 per cent for the first three years, at which point savers have an option to fix the rate at 8.25 per cent for the last two years or opt for the prevailing variable rate.

In a bid to keep their existing Tessa holders sweet, several institutions offer better terms to loyal savers who reinvest their proceeds. Nationwide will pay loyal savers a bonus of 1 per cent at the end of the term plus travel vouchers worth £200.

The Woolwich will pay an extra 0.25 per cent interest a year to its existing Tessa customers who take out a follow-up Tessa.

It has also launched a Guaranteed Growth Tessa for its existing Tessa holders. This pays 5.75 per cent in the first year, rising to 10 per cent in the fifth year on the original capital and rolled up on the accumulating balance each year. For a Tessa holder who invests the maximum £9,000 on January 1, 1996 the account will pay back £12,884.65 at the end of the term.

Some have began to spice their Tessa deals by linking the investment to the performance of the UK stock market. HSBC, the Hong Kong-based bank which owns Midland, is offering a Tessa which pays at least 5 per cent a year plus a bonus pegged to the rise in the Financial Times Stock Exchange Index of 100 top UK companies.

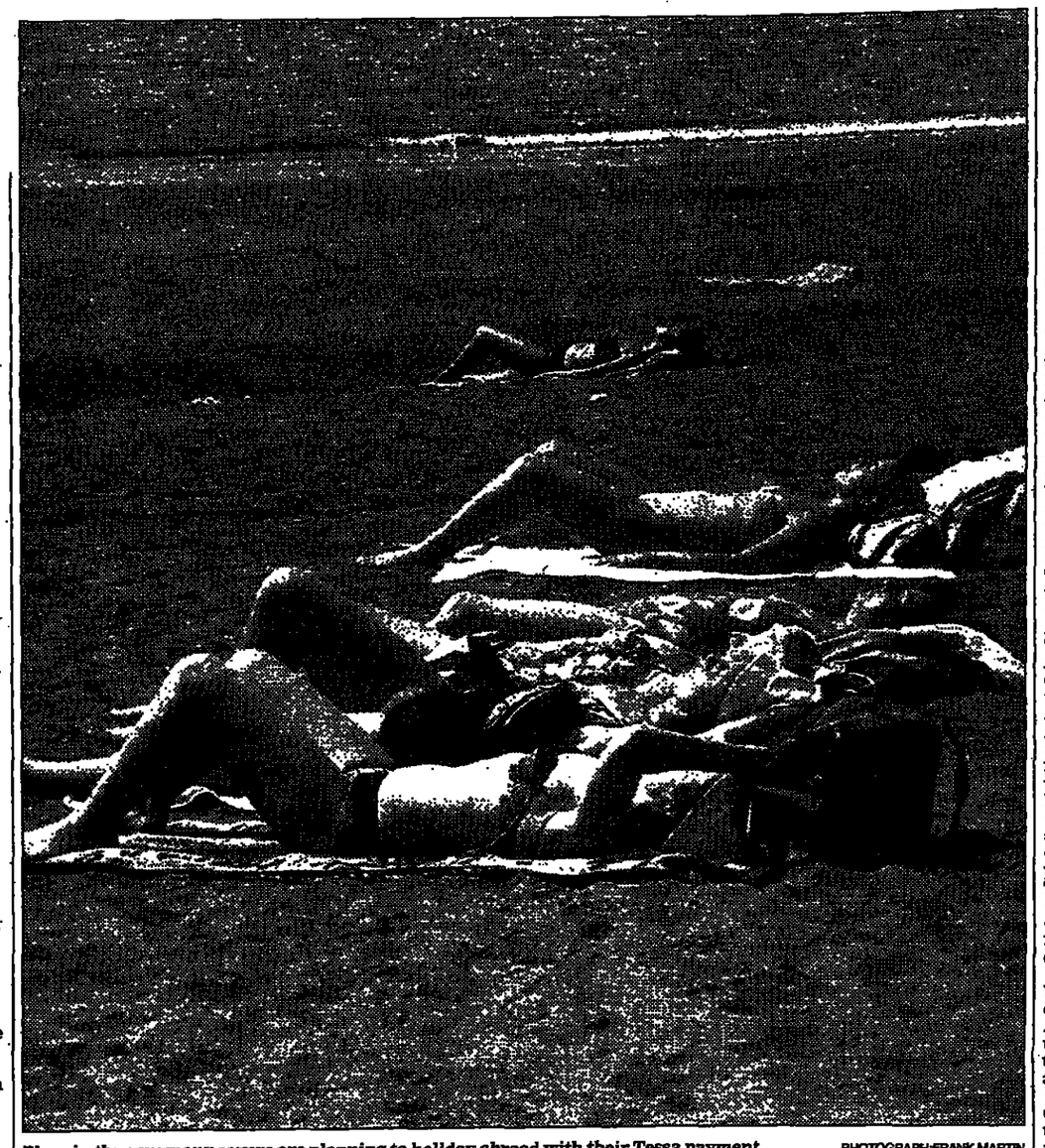
If at the end of five years the FTSE100 has risen by more than 25 per cent savers will get an additional bonus of up to 30 per cent of the original investment. The Bristol & West offers a similar deal on an investment of £9,000 which will give investors the full benefit of the growth of the FTSE100 over five years or pay interest of at least 4 per cent a year.

Savings institutions are also introducing new non-Tessa savings accounts to stem the outflow of maturing Tessa cash into retailers' tills.

Sums paid

Source	£
Bradford & Bingley	12,093.40
Halifax	12,040.86
Bristol & West	12,019.36
Woolwich	12,011.62
Yorkshire B/Soc	11,960.00
National & Provincial	11,946.07
Nationwide	11,930.42
Britannia	11,924.17
TSB Bank	11,904.68
Alliance & Leicester	11,874.87
Cheltenham & Glos	11,872.63
Royal Bank of Scotland	11,870.47
Abbey National	11,829.00
Chelsea B/Soc	11,807 79
Co-Op Bank	11,765.13
NatWest	11,660.59
Robert Fleming	11,594.95
Lloyds Bank	11,533.22
Midland	11,492.56
Barclays	11,489.89

The projected returns include bonuses and assume that the Tessa was opened at launch with the maximum investment of £9,000 and thereafter maximum yearly contributions have been made



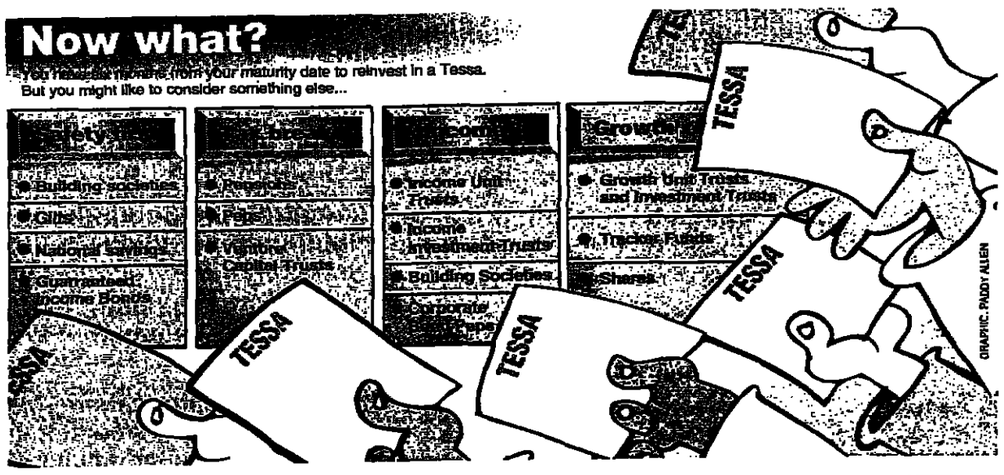
Place in the sun: many savers are planning to holiday abroad with their Tessa payment PHOTOGRAPH:FRANK MARTIN

How to hold her hand

- Tax Exempt Special Savings Accounts (Tessas) provide tax-free interest when the capital is left untouched for five years. After the maturity date, all capital and gross interest is repaid as a lump sum.
- The maximum investment over the life of the first Tessas is set at £9,000, subject to the following ceilings: £3,000 in the first year, £1,800 in years two, three and four, and £600 in the fifth year. Funds may be invested as an annual lump sum of regular amounts over the year, depending on the terms of the individual savings institution.
- Existing holders can reinvest the maturing capital up to £9,000, in a new Tessa within six months of maturity.
- Holders with less than £9,000 invested in their first Tessa when it matures can re-invest capital and interest together up to £3,000 within a follow-up Tessa also within six months of maturity, followed by the usual maximum investment of £1,800 for the next three years and £600 in the last year.
- The bank or building society will ask for a certificate of maturity which proves that the former Tessa is closed.
- If the capital is withdrawn before the end of the five year term, all interest earned will be liable to tax.
- The Tessa loses its tax benefit if the account is closed before it matures. Any interest is then added to the holders income for that tax year and taxed accordingly.
- Interest may be withdrawn net of basic rate tax throughout the five-year term, provided the capital is left untouched. The basic rate deducted does not go to the Inland Revenue, but stays in the account where it earns further interest.
- Tessas can be opened at most banks and building societies and some bank owning investment groups.
- A Tessa may be transferred to another institution during the course of the five years to take advantage of better rates or possible windfalls following a merger or takeover, but this may carry a fee or loss of interest.
- Anyone applying to take out a Tessa will need to produce their National Insurance number and sign a declaration saying that they do not already hold one elsewhere.
- Tessas do not have to be included on a tax return unless the account is closed before its maturity date.
- People investing in Tessas must be over 18 and are limited to one per person, but married couples can have one each.

Money Guardian is edited by Margaret Hughes

Now what?



The best new rates

Fixed Rate Tessas

Source	Rate %	Min. deposit £
TSB Bank	7.64	9,000
Northern Rock	7.64	9,000
West Bromwich	7.55	3,000
Barclays Bank	7.50	7,500
Bradford & Bingley	7.50	9,000

Variable Rate Tessas

Source	Rate %	Min. deposit £
Northern Rock	8.00	9,000
Cheltenham & Gloucester	7.75	1,000
Northern Rock	7.50	3,000
Alliance & Leicester	7.25	9,000
West Bromwich	7.15	3,000
Woolwich	7.05	9,000

ADVICE YOU CAN TRUST
Directly by telephone
24 hours a day
0345 6789 10
Issued by Scottish Widows' Fund and Life Assurance Society, a mutual company.
Regulated by the Personal Investment Authority.
Information/advice will only be provided on Scottish Widows products.
SCOTTISH WIDOWS

Court ruling gives skiers soft landing

Richard Colbey

WITH the new year marking the start of the skiing season, people heading for the piste can now benefit from a landmark legal ruling affecting holiday insurance claims.

The Court of Appeal has backed a claim by a schoolgirl that will affect at least 18,000 other similar outstanding claims against the Association of British Travel Agents (Abta).

Four years ago Emma Bowerman booked a skiing trip through Nower Hill School, Pinner, Middlesex and shortly afterwards the tour operator, Adventure Express Travel Services, went bust.

Abta then helped Emma and the other 55 staff and pupils who had signed up for the holiday to arrange for another company to take over the booking.

Abta operates a scheme which enables the victims of its members' insolvencies to get a refund or, if they prefer and it can be arranged, a similar holiday.

However, the new operator would only honour the booking on payment of a further £10 each. Abta refused to return this sum, saying it represented insurance premiums and was therefore outside the terms of the scheme.

Although the school, supported by the new tour operator, challenged this, Abta dug in its heels. Eventually Emma and teacher Stephen Wallace agreed to bring test cases. Despite the relatively small sum involved, the action was initially heard in the High Court, which is normally reserved for claims of more than £25,000.

Abta did not attempt to justify distinguishing between insurance policies and the other costs of the holiday, but instead argued that it was not under an obligation to give any refund. It claimed that it merely did so on an ex gratia basis and that its decisions about payments should not be reviewed by the courts.

This statement is probably one that would alarm many holidaymakers who hand over money to travel agents believing that, so long as that agent boasts Abta membership, their money is secure. Indeed, all Abta members have to display a notice saying, among other things: "Where holidays or other travel arrangements have not yet commenced at the time of (an agent's or tour operator's) failure, Abta arranges for you to be reimbursed in respect of your holiday arrangements."

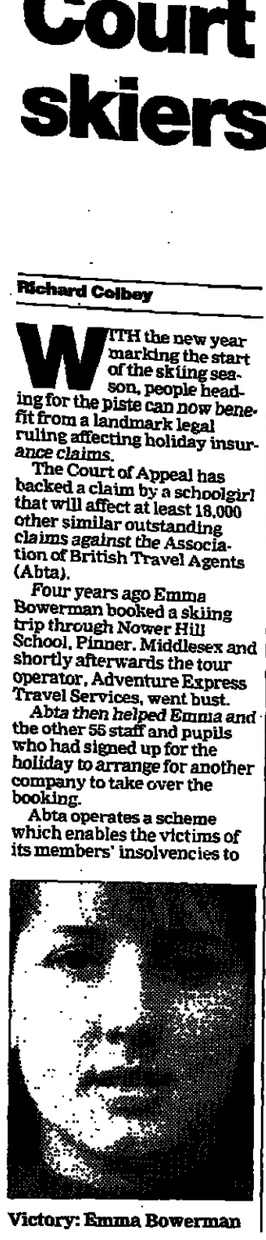
However, Abta persuaded the first judge that, as it did not enter into any agreement with the customer, it could not be bound by the notice. This somewhat artificial argument was rejected by the Court of Appeal, which allowed Emma and Mr Wallace's claims.

It decided that Abta had made a promise to all the potential customers of its members. At least partly because of that promise, those people went on to make actual bookings with those travel agents. That was enough for the customers to have a legally binding contract with Abta.

The wording of the notice was clearly wide enough to cover insurance premiums. Abta is now considering expressly excluding these premiums from the monies it is prepared to refund and so long as it says so in its notice, it will be entitled to do that.

As well as those people who have lost out because of Abta's policy of refusing to refund insurance premiums, anyone who has had a claim refused by Abta for any reason over the past six years may now have a right of action.

Richard Colbey is a barrister



Victory: Emma Bowerman

Mountain high: landmark judgment on holiday insurance PHOTOGRAPH: DENIS THORPE

Chill brings some cold comfort

MANY of those braving the current freezing conditions in Britain will find a little extra comfort when they receive their next state benefit payment, *writes Cliff Jones.*

The cold weather payment is £8.50 for each week when the average temperature is below zero. Temperatures are monitored by 55 local weather stations, which must register an average temperature below zero for seven consecutive days before people on income support receive the extra payment.

The Department of Social Security pays the extra to people on income support if they have children under five years old. Payments are also made to pensioners and disabled people on income support, but not to retired people who receive company pensions or those not eligible for income support.

The DSS says: "People do not have to claim for this benefit. It is automatically paid to those who need it most."

Several weather stations throughout the country have registered sub-zero temperatures over the past week. The coldest city in Britain was Glasgow which, with a low of -19.7 degrees, was colder even than Moscow. Other areas where payments will be made include Aberdeen, Carlisle, Edinburgh, Dumfries, Birmingham, Manchester and Leeds.

The payout of £8.50 per week was increased in November from last year's £6. The particularly harsh winter of 1991/92 brought 3.8 million payouts, costing a total of £23 million.

● Help the Aged wants to hear by letter from senior citizens caught between the old capital limits, above which the elderly have to pay for part or all of the cost of their long-term care, and the new limits, which do not take effect until April 1, 1996.

Letters from those affected will help the charity in its campaign for the Government to grant an interim award.

Holiday firms woo early birds

Cliff Jones

TOUR operators are gearing up for a spending spree after the week of freezing weather. They are also hoping that holders of maturing Tessas may be tempted to blow some of their savings on a luxury summer holiday in the sun.

Thomson, the UK's largest holiday company, is so eager for people to book ahead that it has issued dire warnings to those hoping to pick up last-minute summer holiday bargains. The company has introduced a new price structure where the cost of a holiday actually increases as the time of departure nears.

In the past, late bookers have been able to buy cut-price holidays from tour operators struggling to fill flights at short notice. Charles Newbold, managing director of Thomson, says many people looking for such bargains could find themselves grounded: "Taking into account the shortage of holidays for next summer, hundreds of thousands of would-be holidaymakers will inevitably find their travel agents' shelves empty if they leave their decision too late."

The agents themselves will be partly to blame if there is a shortage of holidays. Tour operators have withdrawn 1.5 million holidays for 1996 following a slump in bookings. Sales over the Christmas period were down by almost a third on the same period last year.

Roddy MacPhee, marketing director of AT Mays, says: "Late bookers will not be getting the same deals they might have found last year. We genuinely believe that operators are matching the capacity of the marketplace." AT Mays, like many travel agents, has cut 15 per cent off all Freespirit, Style and Inspirations Greece holidays. The company is also offering 20 per cent off sailings on the QE2 with a free cabin upgrade.

Agents are not only making cuts to keep their prices in line with fierce competition. It is abundantly clear that the tour operators are desperate to attract business throughout the January period when more than one million people book their holidays.

Lunn Poly has introduced a new payment scheme which allows customers to pay for their holidays in instalments. Its Easy Pay scheme allows those who buy a holiday worth more than £200 to spread four payments over the year. The holiday must be paid for in full 10 weeks before the date of departure.

The drawback is that customers who pay in instalments cannot take advantage of the 10 per cent brochure discount on their chosen holiday. Travellers who choose to spread the payment must also buy Lunn Poly's travel insurance when they book the holiday.

Customers who do not use the Easy Pay option or the 10 per cent discount can opt for free travel insurance instead.

Customers who book their holidays through Airtours, First Choice, Sunworld and Unijet can spread their payments over an even longer period. Through Co-op Travelcare, customers can pay in 10 monthly instalments using its Easy Payment Plan, but they must forsake the 15 per cent brochure discount. The interest-free credit facility is arranged by the agent in conjunction with the Co-operative Bank.

the Ecology Building Society

MORTGAGE RATES
As from 1st January 1996

	Gross %PA
Basic Variable Rate	7.69

INVESTMENT RATES
As from 1st January 1996

Account Type			Gross %PA
Ordinary Shares/Foundation Shares			1.15
Ordinary & Business Deposit			1.00
Registered Charity			4.80
Eco-Instant	Tiered		
	£5 -	£499	1.15
	£500 -	£4,999	3.80
	£5,000 -	£9,999	4.05
	over £10,000		4.30
Green TESSA*			6.15 (CAR 6.24)
Earthsaver Bonds Issue 1 (Closed Issue).			5.95

Interest will be payable net on the basic rate of income tax (which may be reclaimed by non-taxpayers) or subject to registration, GROSS. The actual net amount receivable by the investor who has not registered for interest gross will depend upon the basic rate of income tax in force at the time interest is credited or paid out.
* Tax exempt interest rate.
The compound annual rate (C.A.R.) is the annualised rate, taking into account the compounding of interest paid half yearly.
PLEASE REMEMBER YOUR HOME IS AT RISK IF YOU DO NOT KEEP UP REPAYMENTS ON A MORTGAGE OR OTHER LOAN SECURED ON IT
THE ECOLOGY BUILDING SOCIETY (FREEPOST)
18 Station Road, Cross Hills, Keighley, BD20 5BR
Tel. 0345 697758

ANNOUNCEMENT

M&G is proposing to launch a new Investment Trust in February this year. This will be available for investment in The M&G PEP for a limited period only.

It will provide an opportunity for you to invest your tax free PEP allowance for both the current tax year and for the 1996/97 tax year – a total tax free investment of up to £12,000.

FREE

The new edition of the M&G Handbook is now available, giving details of M&G's range of PEPs, Unit Trusts, Savings Plans and Regular Income Plans.

For details return the coupon or telephone (24 hour literature service) 0990 600 621.

To: The M&G Group, Bristol BS38 7ET. Please send me a free copy of the new M&G Handbook and details of the new M&G Investment Trust.
NO SALESMAN WILL CALL.

You should contact your independent financial adviser (if you have one) before investing. The price of units and the income from them can go down as well as up. The value to you of the tax benefits will depend on your own circumstances. The tax regime of PEPs could change in the future.

Mr/Mrs/ Miss	INITIALS	SURNAME
ADDRESS		
POSTCODE		DF-NAAGSA

M&G does not offer investment advice or offer any recommendations regarding investments. We only market the packaged products and services of the M&G marketing group.

Issued by M&G Financial Services Limited. (Regulated by The Personal Investment Authority.) M&G Unit Trusts are managed by M&G Securities Limited. (Regulated by IMRO and The Personal Investment Authority.)

We never make your name and address available to unconnected organisations. We will occasionally tell you about other products or services offered by ourselves and associated M&G Companies.

Tick the box ☐ if you would prefer not to receive this information.

M&G

Managing your money for the longer term

THE M&G PEP

Liquidators Price Waterhouse, hunting hidden assets, turn attention to Barings' higher management

Leeson will not appeal

Nick Cumming-Bruce and Roger Cowe

FORMER Barings rogue trader Nick Leeson will not appeal against the six-and-a-half-year jail sentence imposed earlier this month in Singapore on two charges of fraud and forgery, arising from derivatives trades that brought about the collapse of Britain's oldest merchant bank.

Leeson's decision not to appeal came as Price Waterhouse, liquidators of his former employer, Baring Futures Singapore (BFS), continued the hunt for hidden assets left over from the bank's collapse, by obtaining court authority to question six former BFS directors.

Lawyer John Koh disclosed Leeson's appeal decision after meeting him in Tanah Merah prison yesterday, on the eve of the deadline for filing an appeal. Mr Koh made no comment on the reasons.

Mr Leeson's sentence was considerably harsher than he had hoped for, after striking a deal to co-operate with Singapore's white collar crime investigators from the Ministry of Finance's Commercial Affairs Division.

But Leeson appears to have concluded that an appeal would have little chance of reducing his sentence. He had to consider the possibility that under Singaporean law the judge has discretion to impose a stiffer sentence.

His appeal would have come before Chief Justice Yong Pung How, a known hardliner who has pushed for harsher sentencing across the board and earlier this year declared: "Compassion went out of the window long ago. Now I just deliver justice."

The decision leaves Mr Leeson, 28, to serve three years and seven months, allowing for one-third remission for good behaviour and taking into account the time he was detained in Germany pending extradition to Singapore.

Despite Mr Leeson's assistance to Singapore's CAD investigators and an official report by Price Waterhouse highly critical of Barings' top management, he remains the only person so far brought to trial for the losses that caused the bank's collapse.

Legal sources emphasised yesterday that the court order Price Waterhouse obtained to interview former BFS directors was "mainly to gather information" that would assist their efforts to recover assets for distribution to creditors.

The six include BFS managing director James Bax, Simon Jones, who was chief operating manager in Singapore, Peter Norris, chief executive of Barings' investment banking operations, and Michael Killian, Barings' head of global equity broking and trading who works out of Barings' San Francisco office. The other two BFS directors named in the order are Fu Ya Yin and Roy Johnson, now company secretary of ING Barings.

Mr Norris, who denies the cover-up alleged in a Price Waterhouse report for the Singapore authorities, refused to comment yesterday. "I have no reaction", he said. Other directors were unavailable.

Some question remains over the enforceability of the Singapore court ruling in Britain. Price Waterhouse has already served a similar order on Mr Leeson's British solicitor, Steven Pollard, requiring submission of any documents relating to Mr Leeson's assets.

The CAD is separately weighing the possibility of prosecuting other Barings managers in Singapore and Britain. Mr Norris and Mr Bax in particular were sharply criticised by Price Waterhouse inspectors for attempting to cover up Leeson's losses.

Mr Bax and Mr Jones are still in Singapore and reportedly allowed to leave only with the authorities' consent. Both were interviewed by Price Waterhouse for its report and co-operated with CAD investigators. But Singapore authorities would need evidence of criminal, not merely alleged civil offences, to apply for extradition of those resident in Britain.

Saturday Notebook

Wooing both voters and the bond markets

Mark Milner

IN THE early days of the Clinton presidency, according to Bob Woodward's chronicle of its first year, The Agenda, the administration's chief Congressional lobbyist Howard Paster demanded, with pardonable frustration: "How many votes does the (expletive deleted) bond market have? We've got to win votes on the Hill, not on Wall Street."

On this side of the Atlantic, Mr Paster's querulous interjection — into a fraught debate over the budget deficit — will find frequent echo over the next 12 months and beyond, albeit in a number of different languages.

Just as in the US, budget deficits lie at the heart of the contradiction between European politicians' attempts to woo simultaneously both their voters and the international bond markets. That contradiction has already found dramatic expression in the public sector strike which paralysed France for much of December. Other EU governments will have to confront the same dilemma as they seek to trim spending or raise taxes (or both) to bring their finances into line with what is now regarded as the norm.

The whole problem has been given greater immediacy by the agreement to set the date for a decision on membership of those considered ready to sign up for a single currency.

It is not simply a question of monetary union, however. The terms laid down by the Maastricht treaty have now assumed a wider importance, even for those countries which know, in their heart of hearts, that they will not meet the criteria by the end of 1997.

That section of the treaty which relates to foreign exchange stability within an exchange rate mechanism which now bears no resemblance to the one which held sway (for want of a better description) when the treaty was drawn up remains a matter for interpretation for heads of government who, in Madrid, found their inspiration limited to deciding the single currency should be called the euro.

However, the tough limits on inflation, interest rates, government debt and deficits are touted, not simply as a way of avoiding being blackballed for the single currency club, but as important economic objectives in their own right.

THE snag is that it is hard to disentangle enthusiasm (or scepticism) on the question of a single currency from a proper economic debate about the merits of the four main planks of the Maastricht accord on monetary union.

At one end of the scale there are those who argue that the drive for a single currency must be supported because of the overwhelming political advantages of strengthening the ties between the European states. The last great war in Europe ended only 50 years ago and, for the super Euro-enthusiasts, the example of what was Yugoslavia shows that the danger is far from over.

At the Euro-sceptic end of the scale, the argument is again more political than economic — that in signing up for a single currency, countries are effectively transferring large chunks of political power away from national governments and parliaments to an organisation — the European central bank — which is unelected and unaccountable.

Between these two poles are those who take more pragmatic approaches — those who want to be in because it makes economic sense, those who want to be in to avoid the disadvantages of being left out; and those who say they will only sign up if and when it is positively advantageous to do so.

BUT what of the criteria in isolation? As more and more of Europe's provision for retirement and, possibly, health care switches from pay-as-you-go to private provision the control of inflation will become increasingly important to an ever larger section of Europe's population. Low interest rates reduce business costs, lower government borrowing may well help to prevent the phenomenon of "crowding out" — where governments absorb a disproportionate amount of available investment resources.

That is fine as far as it goes but the strategy has a number of snags, not least that one of the most serious problems facing the European Union is the level of unemployment and, according to critics at least, a labour market which lacks the flexibility to deliver greater job creation. It is all very well to say that low inflation and low interest rates will deliver sustainable growth. There is, however, a decent counter argument which says public spending on job creation is money well spent; both in getting people back to work and, in the longer term, actually reducing demands on the public purse.

Bond market investors and analysts decided their economic priorities years ago. Look no further than the interest rate premiums that governments like France, Italy and the UK have to pay compared with Germany. It is not only the Bundesbank which loves low inflation and a stable currency.

But do Europe's voters share the view from the bond markets? Not too many have been given the chance to answer the question directly but from the evidence available the answer looks likely to be in the negative.

It is all very well to favour the idea of monetary union on political grounds but it is by no means self evident that the economic policies which have come to be linked with it through the Maastricht treaty would, in themselves, command electoral support. Few countries would meet the criteria now, so the economic screws have still to be ratcheted up a notch or two yet which will not add to any government's popularity.

Yet, the politicians know that if they fail to pursue policies which have as their goal the criteria laid down at Maastricht, then the bond market will extract a higher price in terms of interest rates.

Currency markets will also have a view on those countries not likely to be able to sign up for monetary union in the foreseeable future, even if not by 1999.

But in their drive to meet the Maastricht requirements, governments run the risk of alienating ever larger sections of their electorates. The price for cutting budget deficits may well be rising democratic deficits.

Top finance official in Japan quits

Kevin Rafferty in Tokyo

JAPAN'S powerful ministry of finance suffered a humiliating blow yesterday when its senior official resigned in an attempt to stem public anger over a series of financial scandals that have undermined trust in the integrity of the banks, the ministry and the whole financial system.

Kyosuke Shinozawa was also seen as the fall guy taking some of the heat from his political master, the finance minister, Masayoshi Takemura. Some opposition MPs said that the minister should resign to take responsibility for Japan's financial mess, but Mr Takemura said it was his job to soldier on and solve the problem of bankrupt housing loan companies.

Although the announcement of Mr Shinozawa's resignation as vice-minister, the equivalent of a permanent secretary, was made by Mr Takemura at a press conference called suddenly just after the markets closed for the year, the minister was vague over which of the many crises was responsible for the official's departure.

He denied that it was because of the public outcry this month over plans to use 680 billion yen (£4.35 billion) of taxpayers' money to bail out the housing loan companies.

The minister cited a number of "scandalous incidents" and said that Mr Shinozawa had felt "troubled" by Daiwa Bank's losses of $1.1 billion (£710 million) in New York thanks to a rogue trader's dealings in US treasury bonds. The finance ministry was attacked for its failure to tell the US financial authorities of its knowledge of the losses until six weeks after they were discovered.

The ministry's reputation for rectitude has also suffered from revelations of murky dealings between some leading officials and controversial businessmen who tried to sweeten relations with special loans and favours.

Mr Shinozawa had been in his post for less than a year. He took over in May from Jiro Saito, reckoned to be the most powerful official for a generation, who was forced out by political pressures. The two resignations and the failure to resolve the financial crisis have badly dented the previously powerful position of the finance ministry. Five years of virtually no growth have also undermined its reputation.

Japan's financial institutions have admitted that they hold more than 40,000 billion yen (£255 billion) in bad loans, though foreign analysts say the true figure may be more than double the official one.

The ministry's efforts to get on top of the problem have been much criticised. This month the ministry failed in its struggle with the ministry of agriculture to persuade powerful farming organisations, the biggest providers of funds to the mortgage companies, to bear a bigger portion of the losses. Its plans for bank reform, just announced, have also come under fire as too timid. But another resignation is unlikely to solve the problems and may lead to demoralisation.

The Tokyo stock market failed to regain the 20,000 mark yesterday and the Nikkei index finished the year by losing 4.98 points, to close for the year at 19,868.15.

Kyosuke Shinozawa: seen as a fall guy PHOTOGRAPH: AP/Kyodo

Sleaze factor hits Far East

Industrial staff

INSTITUTIONS in the Far East were rocked yesterday when it emerged that the chairman of Korea's Daewoo Group and the governor of Taiwan's central bank were at the centre of inquiries into financial malpractice.

Daewoo chairman Kim Woo-choong has been charged with giving 50 million won (£41,528) to Kim Chong-hwi, former chief secretary for security and foreign affairs, in return for favours surrounding the government's arms build-up.

Revealed on state television, the indictment is part of an investigation into a slush-fund operated by ex-president Roh Tae-woo. Kim Chong-hwi, who held office under Mr Roh, has been in detention since mid-December, charged with receiving 130 million won in 1992 from Daewoo and a US firm, the TV report said.

Mr Kim, with the heads of six other South Korean conglomerates, has already been indicted on charges of giving 24 billion won to Mr Roh during his 1988-93 term in office.

Investigations into the multi-billion dollar arms project centre on a decision taken during Mr Roh's administration to buy 120 F-16s from General Dynamics Corp of the US.

Mr Roh confessed in a televised apology in mid-October that he had amassed a $654 million (£436 million) slush fund while in office.

Meanwhile, the Control Yuan, Taiwan's top watchdog, has impeached central bank governor Sheu Yuan-dong. The impeachment stems from a T$10 billion (£238 million) scandal at International Bills Finance in August which sparked criticism that official inspections were not stringent enough. Central bank and Bank of Taiwan officials were also impeached.

Forte forecast boosts defence

Ian King

FORTE yesterday fired the latest salvo in its battle to fight off Granada's £3.3 billion takeover bid, producing its second profits forecast in three weeks, and insisting again that Granada's offer was too low.

Forte said it expected to make pre-tax profits of "not less than" £190 million in the year to the end of January 1996, against its most recent forecast of £185 million, and against last year's profits of £127 million.

The company said it had been forced to hoist its forecast because of exceptionally strong demand for its hotel rooms throughout December and the Christmas period.

It said London hotel room sales were up 25 per cent, while forward bookings were "strong", particularly for business booked through its new reservation system.

Unveiling the increased forecast, chairman and chief executive Sir Rocco Forte said: "This is the answer of Forte's staff that they are not good at their jobs. I am very proud to announce this profit increase on their behalf."

However, Granada — which has pledged to lift Forte's profits by £100 million in one year — hit back, arguing that even with pre-tax profits of £190 million, Forte's estimate was still less than that of its house broker in April, and was 7 per cent lower, in real terms, than profits five years ago.

Granada chief executive Gerry Robinson, speaking from his holiday home in Ireland, said: "Even after this revision, Forte's performance is still worse than five years ago, a year which they themselves described as 'one of the most difficult which our industry has faced for many years'. This only underlines what we've been saying all along — Forte is failing to achieve a decent return on its assets."

Granada also seized on the disclosure that Forte is to increase the discount it makes available to its "gold card" shareholders from 10 per cent to 12.5 per cent, claiming it showed Forte was worried about the loyalty of small shareholders.

The claim, denied by Forte, follows news earlier this week that Forte has agreed to sell its roadside restaurant, budget hotel and motorway services businesses — including Little Chef, Happy Eater and Welcome Break — to Whitbread for £1 billion.

Attention will now focus on what Forte says on Tuesday in its defence document in which it is expected to give further details on the Whitbread deal, and to give an increased valuation of its hotels.

Although Sir Rocco is committed to reinvesting most of the proceeds in Forte's remaining hotels, it is thought the group may announce either a special dividend to shareholders, or a share buy-back.

Forte shares closed up 1p at 330½p, while Granada shares closed up 1p at 645p.

News in brief

Trafalgar wins eastern battle

An offshoot of the embattled engineering group Trafalgar House has won a HK$1.34 billion (£113.5 million) contract to build bridges and underpasses across the Rambler Channel in Hong Kong. Gammon Construction, a joint venture by Trafalgar and Jardine Pacific, must complete the work by October 1998. On Tuesday Gammon is due to announce it has won a HK$3 billion contract for work on Hong Kong's new airport.

Electric fence

Stephen Littlechild, the electricity industry watchdog, has published proposals to ringfence the finances of South Western Electricity and Eastern Group. The measures are aimed at protecting their regulated activities following takeovers of the two firms by US utility Southern and the Hanson group respectively.

Care gains Haven

Care UK, the specialist nursing home operator, yesterday snapped up full control of Haven Services, its management and monitoring services operator, for £2.7 million. Under the deal Commercial Union, which has sold its 49.9 per cent stake in Haven, becomes a 10 per cent shareholder in Care UK.

Water mark

Monday sees the creation of United Utilities, the first utility to be created through a merger of water and electricity companies. It was formed in the wake of the takeover of regional electricity company Norweb by North West Water.

Firms in call for rates cut

Sarah Ryle

BRITISH businesses today call on the Chancellor to cut interest rates in order to boost the fortunes of domestic firms. They also predict an upturn in investment during 1996 which they say will increase competitiveness abroad.

The deputy director general of the British Chambers of Commerce, Richard Brown, hopes that the recent cut in base rates to 6.5 per cent will reverse the 1995 slowdown in economic growth.

He says: "The main priority for government of a stable economic environment with low inflation looks like being maintained and will bring increased prosperity to UK firms.

"Essential to this are more interest rate cuts throughout the year. Britain has the highest interest rates in the G7 and these must be brought down as a matter of priority."

Many City analysts believe interest rates must come down again if the Chancellor is to meet his 3 per cent growth target next year.

The next meeting between Kenneth Clarke and the Bank of England Governor, Eddie George, to discuss interest rates is due on January 17.

The BCC's annual message to its 200,000 members also stresses that the Government keep a tight grip on public spending to avoid overheating in the economy.

There is concern about the convergence criteria for joining European Monetary Union, which Mr Brown says are demanding. The BCC's support for membership in 1999 is reiterated but qualified.

Mr Brown says: "Achieving the criteria is much more important than the issue of timing."

He also warns: "Europe must not fetter its businesses and citizens with unnecessary regulation, and is founded on the principles of the free market."

World back on path to rising prosperity

Sarah Ryle

LIVING standards rose worldwide last year for the first time since 1990, according to the latest survey from the World Bank.

The World Bank Atlas, published today, shows that GNP per head, used as a proxy for living standards, grew by 1 per cent. But the variation between countries was significant, with developing countries excluding the former Soviet Union showing much faster growth rates than the rest of the world.

The report says: "Evidence suggests that, in the developing countries, the poor benefit from this economic growth by gaining better access to education and health services, and that there is a synergy between environmental quality and economic growth."

The average income per head of the low- and middle-income economies, excluding the former Soviet Union, rose by 2.5 per cent, while high-income economies grew at about 2 per cent. But the former Soviet Union economies declined by nearly 15 per cent.

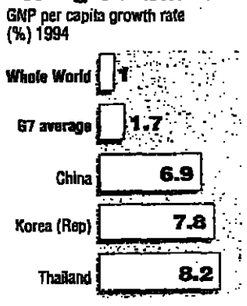
Among the low-income economies, China and India have emerged as two of the world's leading industrial producers and exporters.

There are high-growth countries in every region: Chile and Uruguay in Latin America; Malaysia, Indonesia and Thailand in Asia, and Botswana, Namibia and Uganda in Africa.

Between 1985 and 1994, Thailand had the highest growth rate of GNP per head, at 8.2 per cent, and Korea was second at 7.8 per cent.

Living standards

GNP per capita growth rate (%) 1994



Source: World Bank

Pru seeking new head of fund management as Jenkins retires

Ian King

ONE of the most powerful positions in the City is up for grabs after the Prudential, Britain's biggest institutional fund manager, yesterday announced the retirement of Hugh Jenkins, its head of fund management.

The Prudential, which manages funds of over £70 billion, said a permanent successor had not been chosen for 62-year-old Mr Jenkins. There will be no shortage of applicants for the £373,000-a-year post, which is being temporarily filled by Rodney Dennis, managing director of the division.

Among those believed to be in the frame are Michael Hepher, until recently managing director of BT.

Sir Patrick Sheehy, chairman of BAT Industries, is also stepping down, after 13 years at the helm.

Sir Patrick, who earned £196,000 acording to BAT's latest report and accounts, is credited as the man who saw off Sir James Goldsmith's break-up bid for BAT five years ago.

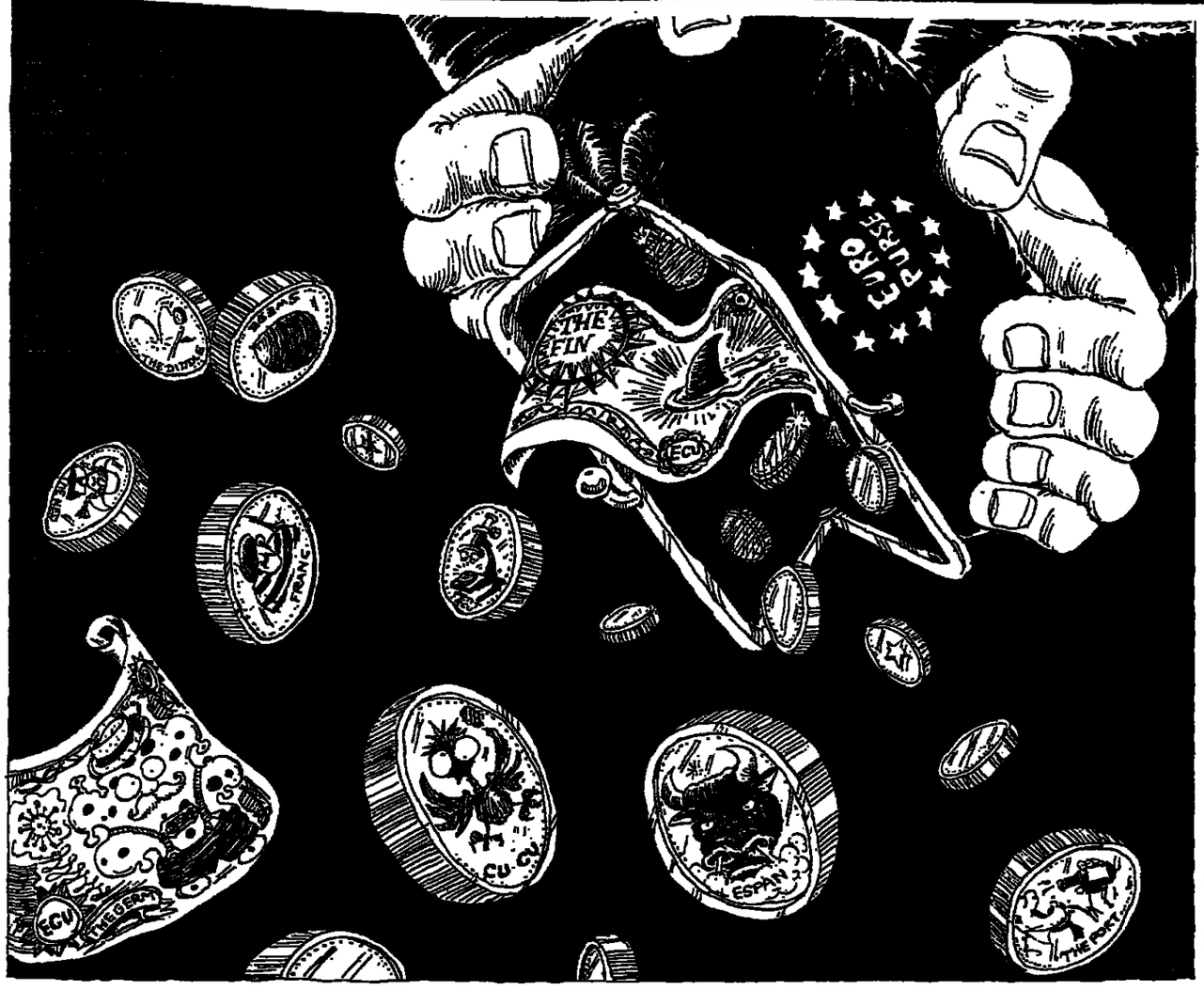
He will be replaced by Lord Cairns, chairman of investment bank SG Warburg until its takeover by Swiss Bank earlier this year, and Sir Patrick's deputy since June.

The appointment is a significant move by BAT — for the first time, its chairman will have come from outside the business. Unlike Sir Patrick, who worked in an executive capacity until only two years ago and spent his whole working life with BAT, Lord Cairns' entire career has been in banking and stockbroking.

TOURIST RATES — BANK SELLS

Australia 2.02	France 7.36	Italy 2,410	Singapore 2.14
Austria 15.05	Germany 2.16	Malta 0.538	South Africa 5.50
Belgium 44.20	Greece 364.00	Netherlands 2.415	Spain 182.26
Canada 2.06	Hong Kong 11.77	New Zealand 2.31	Sweden 10.18
Cyprus 0.695	India 54.65	Norway 9 57	Switzerland 1.72
Denmark 8.38	Ireland 0.94	Portugal 226.00	Turkey 82,237
Finland 6.69	Israel 4.69	Saudi Arabia 5.78	USA 1.515

Supplied by NatWest Bank (excluding Indian rupee and Israeli shekel)



Select a hero, or maybe a heroine, for the euro in our new year competition

IN 1992, when monetary union was still a gleam in Jacques Delors' eye, readers were asked to suggest a name for the sub-division of the single currency. As the penny was to the pound, so we asked for a suitable label for the offshoot of the ecu.

Mr Delors has retired from the European Commission, but with currency union edging closer, if somewhat uncertainly, and the embryo currency already blessed with the name of the euro, we are seeking fresh suggestions — not necessarily entirely serious — on the subject.

One way would be to follow the example of the European Union's leaders in Madrid when they opted for a shortened form of Europe — the euro — by truncating the names of the individual member states. That could give us, for example, the franc, the ital, the espan, the deutsch, the oster, even the ned. In English, however, the solution looks less elegant. Does anyone really want a currency called the swede or the germ?

Last time, many of the entries were derivations of the ecu. Thus we had the pecu, as in petit ecu (among other things), and the cucu — no prizes for guessing the thinking there.

Then we had the likes of the delor, as in de l'or, and the diddle — diminutive item, doubtful denomination, lost easily. The euro is perhaps less flexible as a source of derivatives, while it will be interesting to see if anyone can find a suitable pun on Jacques Santer's name.

The winner will receive the original of the accompanying David Simonds cartoon and entries (on a postcard, please) should be sent to the European Business Page Competition, the Guardian, 119 Farringdon Road, London EC1R 3ER, to be received by January 15.

Telecom companies are looking to raise £45 billion

Predictions mixed for key industries

Financial staff

THREE of Europe's key industries — telecommunications, chemicals and cars — are facing a year of contrasting fortunes, according to analysts.

After a period which has seen prices on a roller-coaster ride, the chemical industry is said to be poised to enjoy better trading conditions and a degree of stability.

Europe's car industry, in the doldrums of late, may stage a modest recovery, according to some forecasters, though Germany, for example, is expecting only a "slight rise" in sales in 1996.

The problem for the telecommunications industry is the demands it will be making on investors at a time of increasing competition and falling prices. European companies are looking to raise an estimated £45 billion, around half analysts' predictions for the global total over the next two years.

Leading the way will be Deutsche Telekom, where the company's privatisation is expected to see an estimated £6.5 billion share sale in the autumn.

Not that far behind will be the Italian government, which is looking to sell its 64 per cent stake in Stet in the spring. Other companies which could launch cash-raising programmes are Belgacom, France Télécom, KPN of the Netherlands and PTT Swiss Télécom.

"The critical question is where's the money going to come from," said Trevor Nash, co-head of the telecommunications advisory group at Barclays de Zoete Wedd. "We reckon we're talking about a $1.4 trillion (£905 billion worldwide) industry this year."

According to James Golob, head of telecommunications research at Deutsche Morgan Grenfell, that is a lot to ask of the world's capital markets, especially for an industry undergoing radical changes in technology and competition as well as ownership.

"It's misleading to think of these companies as either utilities or growth stocks," he said. "They are consumer-oriented service companies, but they face risks unlike other service companies."

Given the increased risk, forthcoming share sales will have to be priced lower than previous sales, according to Laurence Heyworth of Robert Fleming Securities.

The Bloomberg news service quoted Mr Heyworth as telling a London conference: "Deutsche Telekom, the mother of all privatisations in this field, has got to appeal to the lowest common denominator. The whole of Germany is at stake. It's got to be sold cheaply."

For the chemicals industry the outlook looks a little easier to judge. Soaring prices of bulk chemicals early this year squeezed the margins of smaller speciality firms who rely on bulk chemicals for their raw materials.

Conversely, low prices had hit profits at larger firms in 1993. But 1996 is expected to produce a happy medium that will suit both sides of the industry.

Charles Brown and Peter Clark, Goldman Sachs's chemical analysts, predict: "The overall scenario is that markets will begin to stabilise during the early months of 1996 and that eventually there will be some recovery, leading to improved trading conditions later next year and in 1997."

But better times are unlikely to halt the job losses and the drive to cut costs. Squeezed between US firms and the emerging economic powerhouse of the Far East, Europe's chemicals industry has already shed thousands of jobs. Analysts expect industry leaders such as ICI and Germany's Hoechst to continue to cut their cost base.

Alasdair Nisbet, chemicals analyst at UBS, said the European industry as a whole needed restructuring. Soaring prices had tempted firms to hold on to loss-makers that suddenly turned in a profit, while cyclical slumps had discouraged firms from buying. Stable profits predicted for 1996 would provide an ideal environment to reorganise the European industry.

"There are too many players in too many products," he said. "There is no question that restructuring needs to continue throughout the industry."

The car industry is another which has long been the subject of speculation about restructuring. Six volume car manufacturers — Volkswagen, Ford, General Motors through its Opel and Vauxhall marques, Fiat, Peugeot-Citroen and Renault — are sometimes seen as one too many, though so far the speculation has remained just that.

Car sales in Western Europe numbered some 12 million in 1994 and this year the total is thought to have been a little but not much better. German sales were up by 3 to 4 per cent in the first 11 months, but the industry is looking for little further increase in 1996. Last month sales were up by 9.3 per cent in Italy, but fell in France, although the results are distorted by state schemes to encourage the scrapping of old cars.

In the UK, the Society of Motor Manufacturers and Traders believes the recent growth in the UK car market is due to marketing campaigns by manufacturers, not consumer confidence. Sales to November were 1.87 million, 1.97 per cent up on the same period last year.

Stet counts cost of cancelled wedding

John Glover in Milan

MARRIAGE contracts are delicate things, normally negotiated in private. So when the bride's parents throw a tantrum and cancel the wedding right on the church steps, the embarrassment is enormous.

Especially for the jilted groom — in this case Stet, Italy's telecoms holding company. Having beaten off other admirers, Stet was all set to spend $640 million (£410 million) buying a stake of 25 per cent plus one share in Svyazinvest, one of Russia's regional telecoms holding companies. But at the last minute, the lines went down and the deal was put on hold.

The Italians had been frightened off by the Communist victory in the recent parliamentary elections, said Alexander Livshits, President Boris Yeltsin's senior economic adviser. Since they were no longer interested, the bride's hand would be offered to other suitors.

Nothing of the sort, replied Stet in a written statement. The stalled negotiations have "absolutely nothing to do with the outcome of the recent elections but are solely to do with the objective complexities of the operation." These, it went on, "are not compatible with the deadlines fixed for the closing."

All it was asking for was a little more time. And to show it meant business, it was happy to place the $640 million in an escrow account at a foreign bank. The Russians indignantly refused Stet's offer. They say they will re-open the auction — and Stet might not be allowed to take part. Stet hopes they do not really mean it, but foreign carriers beaten in the first round of the auction, such as Germany's Deutsche Telekom, are likely to be rubbing their hands.

Stet's shareholders were not to displeased either. the share price rose 2.6 per cent on the news that the deal had fallen through.

The details behind the abrupt cutting of wires between Moscow and Rome have not yet emerged. Milan analysts point to the need for any buyer of a company to perform "due diligence", an audit of the business on sale to ensure that what is being bought is what it claims to be. Svyazinvest is a federation of almost 90 carriers, none of whose accounts are likely to mean much by western standards. Working out the real level of their debts, for example, would certainly need time.

More intriguingly, there are suggestions that the governments of Stet's rivals may have put pressure on the Russians to pull out in the hope of their companies taking its place at the altar. Ms Susanna Agnelli, Italy's foreign minister and sister of Fiat boss Gianni Agnelli, has taken up Stet's cause directly with the Russian ambassador to Italy.

Vodafone and allies get wrong number for Austria

Nicholas Bannister Technology Editor

VODAFONE, one of the leading British mobile phone companies, has lost out in its attempt to break into the Austrian market. The company was the technical partner in one of the five consortiums bidding for the country's second mobile phone licence.

Yesterday the Austrian government announced that the licence had been awarded to Oe-Call, an Austro-German consortium headed by the local subsidiary of the electronics group Siemens.

Oe-Call bid 4 billion schillings (£262 million) for the licence and the next highest offer was 3.6 billion schillings.

Big UK telecom groups such as British Telecom, Cable & Wireless and Vodafone have been involved in bidding for European mobile licences because in most cases they are the only way into the local market for voice telephony.

Although the European Union is committed to opening all local telecom markets to competition, most governments have gone no further than introducing limited competition in the mobile sector.

The major EU nations such as France and Germany are obliged to open their telecom markets by the start of 1998. But few observers expect that deadline to be met and many believe local regulation will be slanted in favour of the former state-owned monopolies.

Viktor Klima, Austria's state industry minister, said: "We will be offering one of the lowest customer tariffs in Europe and the deal [with Oe-Call] will bring around 8 billion schillings for the 1996 budget."

The Oe-Call consortium is made up of Siemens Austria, EA Generali, Bundeslaender Versicherung, Kronen Zeitung, Bawag and Germany's Bayerische Landesbank and DeTeMobil.

Indian sign on Mods' favourite

John Glover in Milan

IF IMITATION is the sincerest form of flattery, the Indian motorcycle industry's love affair with defunct brands is turning out to be a real winner.

By the end of next year, the Italians and the Swiss may once again be peddling the Mods' favourite form of transport — now made only in the subcontinent — the Lambretta and the Vespa.

The Italians pushed the Lambretta into the parking lot of history 19 years ago, when Innocenti, the company that made them, went bust 20 years after its first scooter emerged from its Milan production line.

Piaggio killed off its equally venerable rival, the Vespa, in 1987 to make way for the Cosa — and with it lots of competitors, both imported and homemade. It has regretted the decision ever since.

The Lambretta is set to whizz back onto the scene courtesy of the Swiss who, with the exception of India where the state-owned SIL makes and sells Lambrettas, have registered the name for the world. The brand is now owned by Dieter Höffmaier, the president of the Swiss Co-operative Association.

Though the money is Swiss, this Lambretta will be made in Italy. Lambretta SA plans to build its scooters in a disused factory near the Venetian town of Rovigo. A grant may also be forthcoming from the European Union.

Feasibility and engineering studies are being carried out, prior to the relaunch planned for the end of 1996, if the money — around 15 billion lire (£6 million) — can be found.

Pisa-based Piaggio is further ahead with its revival. Its new Vespa should be back on the road in the second half of 1996.

It will look rather like the old one but will boast the technology to keep it chugging into the next millennium.

But the Vespa is under threat from the Chetak, none other than a sixties vintage Vespa imported back into Italy from India. Piaggio has unleashed a writ against it, including persuading a judge to sequestrate a thousand scooters this summer.

They were later released but Piaggio is taking its battle into the enemy camp anyway.

It plans to start selling scooters in India. It isn't saying whether they will include the Vespa.

Athletes try running a bank

Financial staff

THREE of Bulgaria's most famous footballers were this week reported to have joined forces with other top athletes to found a commercial bank.

The group is also said to have offered free shares in the enterprise to Todor Zhivkov, the former Communist leader.

According to the Bulgarian daily newspaper 24 Chasa, the founding committee of the bank, which will be called National, includes Hristo Stoichkov, Lyuboslav Penev, Emil Kostadinov and Trifon Ivanov, as well as twice world high-jump champion Stefka Kostadinova.

Stoichkov, who has long played in Spain, is now with Parma of Italy, Kostadinov plays for Bayern Munich and Penev is part of Atletico Madrid's line-up. None of the athletes is officially tied to the ruling Socialist Party of former Communists.

The attempt to make Zhivkov a shareholder is seen as a publicity move. He is under house arrest in Sofia after being convicted of misusing state funds. In 1992, he was sentenced to seven years' imprisonment but has not yet begun to serve the term because of his poor health.

The bank was set up on Tuesday with a starting capital of 500 million leva (£4.4 million). Some 10 per cent of the money was raised from the first 3,200 investors.

The chief executive officer of the bank is Emil Hursev, a former central bank deputy governor. The founders were quoted as saying that the low share price was meant to allow "each Bulgarian to become a shareholder".

Bulgarian World Cup hero Hristo Stoichkov is prominent amongst the founding committee of the National commercial bank PHOTOGRAPH: STEWART KENDALL

Paribas chief to be quizzed over Ciments Français balance sheets

Financial staff

THE chairman of the international banking and finance group, Compagnie Financière de Paribas, has been placed under formal investigation by Judge Eva Joly for "complicity in the dissemination of false information".

Sources close to the investigation said the judge had sent André Lévy-Lang a formal notification and told him to appear at her offices to be formally questioned over off-balance sheet financial operations at Ciments Français in 1991.

Paribas denies that Mr Lévy-Lang was aware of these operations, which allowed Ciments Français to post a 1991 profit instead of a loss, until October 1992.

The sources said a number of other people were being questioned, among them two directors of a Paribas unit, Financière Poliet, which held Ciments Français shares.

In a statement released yesterday afternoon, Paribas said it had been informed that an investigating judge planned to place its chairman, Mr Lévy-Lang, under formal investigation. It said the move fell "within the framework of an ongoing procedure concerning Ciments Français."

"The Compagnie Financière de Paribas and its chairman want to make clear that they have no intention to comment on such a decision. They note that the Compagnie Financière de Paribas has filed a civil suit in this affair in the autumn of 1993."

The statement added that the company and Mr Lévy-Lang "have stated that the entire financial impact of the Ciments Français activities in question has been taken fully into account in the Paribas accounts of 1992 and 1993. "These operations involved the actions of the chairman of Ciments Français at that time, in deliberately hiding from his board of directors, auditors and shareholders unauthorised stock 'parking' transactions."

News of the investigation saw Paribas shares fall six francs to 268 francs. Paribas, which is based in Paris and has activities spanning retail banking, investment banking and equity investment, employs more than 25,000 people worldwide.

Update

□ Escom, the German computer retail group, said it expected to make a loss of around DM45 million (£20 million) as a result of weak fourth quarter sales and other special factors, such as the costs of expanding international retail outlets, including 200 stores in Britain. However, Escom said new British outlets — former Rumbelows shops which it has turned into personal computer stores — would make a "considerable contribution to profits" in 1996.

□ Yesterday's planned auction of 37 per cent of troubled aero-engine maker AO Rybinskiye Motory failed to take place, according to an official at the Russian Federal Property Fund. Rybinsk, once the pride of the Soviet aviation industry, has been in a dispute for nearly two years with the privatisation authorities and Federal Bankruptcy Agency, which declared it insolvent earlier this year.

□ The Bundesbank said it was looking into possible invoicing irregularities by its main supplier of banknotes, Giesecke & Devrient. A magazine report alleged that Giesecke had overcharged the Bundesbank by artificially inflating the price of a chemical used in the production of banknotes during the early 1980s.

□ Portugal's Electricidade de Portugal (EDP), the state-owned electricity company, said on Friday it had doubled profits in 1995 from last year's 30.5 billion escudos (£13 million). Earlier this week the government announced a freeze on electricity prices next year as part of its drive to cut inflation to 3.5 per cent.

□ Turnover in shares and bonds on German exchanges reached a record volume in 1995, rising by 8 per cent to DM8,092 billion, according to Deutsche Boerse. Turnover in bonds rose by more than 16 per cent to DM6,360 billion but turnover in shares fell by 14 per cent to DM1,732 billion, according to provisional data. The Frankfurt stock exchange's share of turnover was more than 75 per cent of the total in Germany.

European business is edited by Mark Milner

Playing the predictions game, page 23

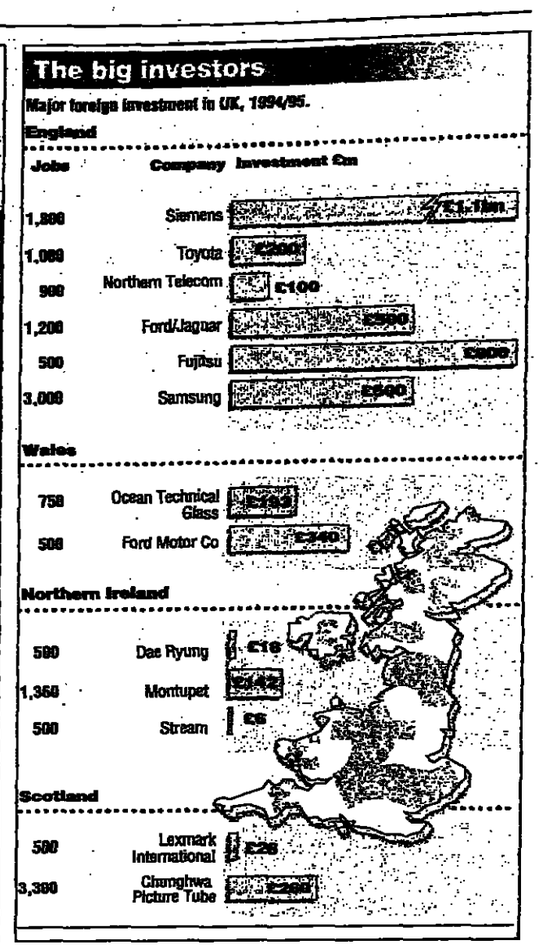
Leeson throws in towel, page 22

Financial Editor: Alex Brummer
Telephone: 0171-239-9610
Fax: 0171-833-4456

FinanceGuardian

Investment from abroad is changing the industrial geography of Britain, but it's harder than ever to win the big money, finds MARTYN HALSALL

No river runs through it... the greenfield site on North Tyneside for the £1.1 billion electronics plant at which Siemens of Germany will employ 1,800 people
PHOTOGRAPH: RAOUL DIXON



The foreign fields of England

WALTER Kemp never imagined his training job would take him so far from his office in Newcastle-upon-Tyne. "When I was a civil servant with the Manpower Services Commission I would have been lucky to have gone to a conference in Sunderland," he said.

Times have changed. Recently he went to China, on a trip that reflects the changing face of inward investment: his visit was designed to help develop the expertise needed at home to attract new firms.

A training scheme he helped to produce, while on secondment to Tyne and Wear Development Corporation from the local Training and Enterprise Council, was a factor in bringing Onwa Electronics, a Hong Kong-financed TV company, to South Shields and ensured that almost 280 workers came off the dole. After less than two years, Onwa is planning a further 150 jobs.

Inward investment accounts for almost a quarter of UK manufacturing output, 33 per cent of net capital spending and 40 per cent of exports.

Recent investment announcements include a £1.1 billion semi-conductor plant planned by Siemens of Germany, which will employ 1,800 on North Tyneside, and a £260 million development in Lanarkshire by Chunghwa, a Taiwanese electronics firm, providing 3,300 jobs.

Jobs created or safeguarded by inward investment in Wales rose 60 per cent this year to 7,002, from 49 different projects. The government agency Locate In Scotland forecast that more than 12,300 jobs would result from what it said was a record year, thanks to planned investment of more than £1.1 billion in 97 projects.

In the North, which has the highest unemployment of any English region, 50,000 people — almost one in five of the working population — owe their jobs to overseas investors. Nearly 400 inward investment projects in the last decade have brought more than $4 billion of spending.

It is a mark of Britain's industrial decline that the Government crows at its success in attracting inward investment. Yet Britain has done well in this field, regularly netting up to 40 per cent of all United States and Japanese investment in the European Union. Investment volumes were hit by recesssion, however, and as they pick up the country is facing a bewildering range of competition.

Once Wales and Scotland — with their own development agencies and more interventionist industrial policies — dominated the domestic scramble for high-profile projects. Now competition at home is cut-throat, with Northern Ireland seeking to put economic flesh on the peace process and the English regions also kicking in.

Abroad, West European countries are actively courting inward investment and have regional government structures which can make their efforts more effective.

East and central Europe continue to present a strong challenge, with cheaper labour and minimal regulation, and Latin America is also staking its claim.

Barry Hartop, chief executive of the Welsh Development Agency, said: "We are striving to match fast-growing competition, both from other European countries and from developing countries. Ten years ago the WDA was one of only three European agencies represented in Japan; today there are 52."

BRITAIN invested £15 billion overseas last year, three times the level of inward investment. Ian Lang, the Trade Secretary, said this reflected "the interlocking nature of the global trading environment in which we are now a full player".

The level of British investment overseas has been criticised by trade union leaders, but they appear more at ease with inward investment. John Monks, general secretary of the TUC, said that apart from jobs: "Japanese firms in particular have brought an attention to quality and process management which has amounted to a revolution in British industry."

Dr John Bridge, chief executive of the Northern Development Company, said there had been a shift in the approach to potential investors. Instead of offering a largely financial package involving grants, the tendency was to present a more holistic case. "The UK is not necessarily very competitive in grant terms and it is likely that grants are not going to get any easier," he said.

A £500 million electronics investment was secured with just £7 million of government aid, said Mr Lang, and "one of the Japanese motor companies came without any assistance — so there is no firm pattern".

Mr Lang said that investors "see the UK as a good competitive and economic base with a well-skilled and motivated workforce, a low corporate tax structure — the lowest in Europe — and a sympathetic attitude to business from central government".

Mr Monks welcomed the greater "reality" with which the Government is now portraying the labour market after overwhelming hostility during the 1980s, but he said: "Exaggerated claims about the impact of the social chapter and the minimum wage can hardly be helpful in encouraging investors".

While large motor industry and electronics projects won the headlines, "most overseas investment has gone into the services sector, especially banks and finance".

IN fact, he said, inward investment totals only 1 per cent of British enterprise, and although Japanese and other Far East investments attract most attention, in the North-east and Cumbria the 50 Japanese companies are far outnumbered by 140 from North America and 200 from Europe.

Preparations for investment do not always run smoothly. Locate in Scotland conceded "a number of disappointments" in the Asia Pacific market during 1994.

When Toyota anounced in 1989 that it was building a £720 million car assembly plant at Burnaston, near Derby, it was hailed as Britain's single largest inward investment. But the chief executive of Derbyshire county council, John Raine, said: "Had Toyota been aware at the time of some of the off-stage spherical objects being dropped, then the outcome might have been very different."

His area became aware of Toyota's interest only 12 weeks before the decision. There was competition from eight other UK sites and from the Continent.

The authority had seven days to prepare an initial pitch, including completion of a 50-page technical questionnaire. No expense was spared, and £2,000 of the £100,000 budget even went on hiring a sports car with the number Derby 1, to be photographed outside Chatsworth House. The Japanese Resource Centre at Sheffield University advised on everything from body language to dress and the etiquette of presenting business cards.

Public relations staff sprayed out graffiti and special teams collected litter. Japanese caterers were brought in for every meal, sightseeing was conducted by helicopter, site visits always included the right sizes of wellington boots and answers were immediately available to questions such as: "Where can I get a heart bypass?".

The investment was badly needed, said Nick Hodgson, the council's deputy chief executive, in an area of declining engineering and textiles industries and dependent economies. His council says the real success is the doubling of production to 200,000 units a year, thanks to an extra £200 million investment which will take the labour force from 1,800 to 3,000.

Alistair Balls is chief executive of the Tyne and Wear Development Corporation (TWDC), responsible for regenerating 30 miles of riverside from post-industrial dereliction. The problem for the corporation is that the geography of regional development has been turned through 90 degrees, from the liquid corridors of the rivers Tyne, Tees and Wear to tarmac access and greenfield sites along the A19.

Many new sites, often associated with just-in-time production, need 24-hour road access and large areas for carparking. This militates against inner-city areas, such as those in South Tyneside with its high male unemployment rates.

The modern sites are also distant, commercially and geographically, from the areas of traditional manufacturing industry. In the North-east, male employment in traditional industry has declined from 30 per cent to less than 1 per cent in the last 30 years.

Onwa's North-east home occupies part of a former railway depot which the TWDC reclaimed at the cost of almost £1 million. The business park by the Tyne where the TWDC has its headquarters is a reclaimed site which has drawn both new businesses and companies already on Tyneside, says Mr Balls.

COMPANIES were attracted not only by the possibility of grant aid, but because they sensed fresh opportunities from a new location and needed to respond to new business demands such as 24-hour operations, he added.

Typically in demand were sites of 300 to 500 acres, close to main roads and conurbations. "There is no other region in England that can provide that," Mr Balls said. "The other factor in attracting industry is our well-trained and flexible workforce."

He said he would be surprised if as much as 25 per cent of the total business coming into the TWDC area was foreign inward investment. While such investment was "tremendous", he said: "It would be wrong to think that inward investment is what the region is primarily about". The priority must always be that it encouraged "the right sort of employment", maximising work opportunities for local people.

Nissan, which arrived in the North-east in the 1980s to make 100,000 cars a year, is now producing 290,000 and has a target of 400,000 by 2000. This coincides with a change of heart within the TUC, which was initially suspicious that inward investment would result in unskilled, "screwdriver" operations by short-term entrepreneurs.

Mr Lang remains optimistic that "most of the companies that have come here in recent years will be here for the long term". But he added: "We live in an age in which the generations of industrial change are shorter and faster moving. There is a need not just to invest but to reinvest, and that is why we are focusing on the after-care."

The Guardian Weekly

Subscribe to a more interesting point of view

with Britain's best international news weekly

The Guardian Weekly Subscription Rates	6 months	1 year
United Kingdom	£24.00	£47.00
Europe (inc. Eire)	£26.50	£52.00
USA, Canada	£28.00	£55.00
Rest of the World	£30.50	£60.00

to: The Guardian Weekly, 164 Deansgate, Manchester M60 2RR
Please mail The Guardian Weekly for ❑ 6 months ❑ 1 year to:-
Name.....
Address.....sc2
Subscription ordered by.....
Address if not as above.....
Please tick if this is a renewal order ❑
I enclose payment of £.....
by ❑ Sterling cheque drawn on U.K. bank payable to 'The Guardian Weekly'
❑ Please debit my Visa/MasterCard/Amex
a/c
Cardholder's signature..... Card expiry date.....
❑ I prefer not to receive promotional offers from selected companies
Credit card orders may be sent to fax no: 0161 876 5362

Are you being served?

Roger Cowe

SERVICE is the watchword for retailers who hope to succeed in what is left of the 1990s.

In the 1980s it was space: superstores sprang up at every roundabout, companies such as Storehouse emerged from mergers, while others, such as Burton and Next, opened new shops as if there were no tomorrow — and indeed there nearly was not, since they were opening shops regardless of the fact that they detracted from, rather than added to, profits.

The recession, and the Government's new approach to superstore planning applications, put an end to the space race and brought back price as the retailers' main weapon. Thus we had virtually permanent sales in the stores, and even Sainsbury trying to persuade shoppers that it really was the cheapest, not just the best. The trouble is, it's not easy to make money by cutting prices. People are eventually put off by permanent sales. They devalue the store. And everybody else does it, too, leading to what executives sometimes euphemistically describe as "a disorderly market", which means that prices are too low and too volatile for their liking.

Only those like Asda with big, cheap stores can compensate for the lower profit margins by winning enough extra sales, but even Asda loses out if Sainsbury feels it has to keep driving prices down.

So if price is a dead end and there is no room for expansion, it is time to try to serve customers once again. That way, perhaps, they will feel wanted, or at least less disgruntled.

The trouble is that service is individual. It requires staff with individual skills who can serve each customer individually. Asking Tesco or Sainsbury to serve customers like real shops used to is like asking Ford or Vauxhall to make custom-built cars.

When mass marketeers try to produce service, what they usually come up with is mass service. That means staff who have been told to ask, "Was everything all right?" but who are flummoxed if the answer is "No". It means "service counters" where customers have to queue to be served.

It means staff who press customers to take store cards, unwanted warranties or service contracts, but who know nothing about the products they are selling and care less about the customers they are selling to.

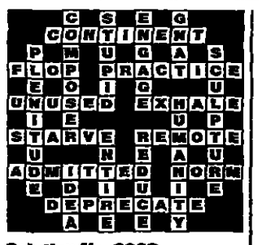
It means transport systems that tell passengers there are no trains or buses, but don't lay on more trains or buses.

Last week, the supermarkets' attempt at service meant ice-cream melting in the hour it took from joining the queue to reaching the checkout with the Christmas shopping. In at least one case it meant a closed supermarket — presumably because the "service" was so good too many people turned up to shop there.

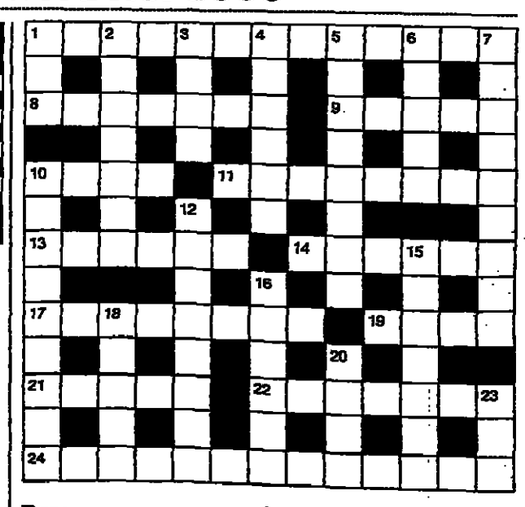
Of course, Christmas is hard for shopkeepers. But it highlights the point that service does not fit terribly well with mass business, which relies on maximum uniformity and minimum staffing. In short, service is expensive. It means highly trained, well-paid, deeply motivated staff, and plenty of them.

Are you being served? I don't think so.

Quick Crossword No. 8009



Solution No. 8008



Across

1 Tiresome person (4,2,3,4)
8 Having left a will (7)
9 Doomed (5)
10 Chair — which politicians seek (4)
11 African republic (8)
13 Hymn (6)
14 Tattle (6)
17 Member of staff (8)
19 Minor — hospital room (4)
21 Proprietor (5)
22 Suppose (7)
24 It takes coins at car parks (6,7)

Down

1 Mine (3)
2 Immediate — second (7)
3 Persia now (4)
4 Quiver (6)
5 Outpouring (8)
6 Additional (5)
7 Abducted, Stevenson novel (9)
10 Fall guy (9)
12 Source of help (8)
15 East African language (7)
16 Boredom (6)
18 Confusion (5)
20 Dusting-powder (4)
23 First woman — the night before (3)

© Published by Guardian Newspapers Limited at 119 Farringdon Road, London EC1R 3ER, and at 164 Deansgate, Manchester M60 2RR. Printed at the Guardian Press Centre, 2 Millharbour, London E14 9NG; Trafford Park Printers, Longbridge Road, Manchester M17 1SL; Ter-Druckerei GmbH, Admiral-Rosendahl-Strasse 1, 6078 Neu-Isenburg/Zeppelinheim, Germany; Nord Eclair, 15/21 rue du Caire, BP69 - 59052 Roubaix, Cedex 1, France, for and on behalf of the Guardian and Manchester Evening News PLC. 48,436, Saturday December 30 1995.

Registered as a newspaper at the Post Office ISSN 0261-3077

London: Telephone 0171-278 2332. Telex 8811746 (Guard G). Fax 0171-837 2114; 0171-833 8342. Telephone sales 0171-611 9000

Manchester: Tel 0161-832 7200. Fax 0161-832 5351/834 3717. Tel sales 0161-834 6666